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THE NEGRO AT JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF RACIAL CHANGE

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES vii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS viii

INTRODUCTION 1

Chapter

I. ALBINA: LOCALE OF JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL . . . 5

II. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL 1900-1940 22

III. NEGRO PIONEERS: ANTECEDENTS OF ALBINA'S BLACK COMMUNITY 38

IV. THE INFLUX AND HOUSING PATTERNS OF THE NEGRO POPULATION 74

V. JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL DURING WORLD WAR II AND TO 1954 112

VI. JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL 1954-1960: ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND "COLOR-BLINDNESS" 130

VII. ENVIRONMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT 149

VIII. THE SIXTIES: A DECADE OF CHANGE 167

EPILOGUE 209

SOURCES CONSULTED 216

APPENDICES 233

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Pacific States Negro Population	76
2.	Percentage of Negroes to Total Labor Forces in War Plants	82
3.	Albina Population	106
4.	Percentage of Negro Enrollment in Elementary Schools in the Jefferson Attendance Area	109
5.	Negro Enrollment at Jefferson High School	170

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure		Page
1.	Age Distribution of Population	10
2.	Location of Portland's High Schools: 1913	13
3.	Elements of Portland's Population: 1910	17
4.	Jefferson High School Courses of Study, 1912-13	25
5.	Areas of Negro Concentration: 1945	88
6.	Distribution of Negro Population: 1940	102
7.	Distribution of Negro Population: 1950	103
8.	Distribution of Negro Population: 1960	104
9.	Jefferson High School Attendance Area	110

INTRODUCTION

In recent years minority groups have become more vocal in focusing the attention of the American people upon their social and economic problems. The Negroes, Afro-Americans, or blacks have been the vanguard of this movement. In addition to civil rights, black Americans demand equal opportunity to share materially and esthetically in the "American way of life." Equal opportunity means, in part, education to equip themselves and their children adequately to assume roles as first-class citizens. Black parents charge that their children are not being given an equal opportunity to learn.

In 1954 when the United States Supreme Court reversed the "separate but equal" philosophy that had governed Negro education since the Flessy v. Ferguson decision in 1896, most Americans believed that the problems of Negroes and Negro education existed solely in the South. The fallacy of that reasoning was soon dispelled. Civil disobedience, riots, and student unrest convinced the American people of major trouble spots in northern cities. Every social agency in large urban centers, particularly the school, was inundated with unsolved problems. The schools became targets of strong attack. The literature of recent years abounds with bitter personal accounts written by black Americans telling of the inadequacies and cruelties that they

encountered within schools. Their denunciations are accompanied by monographs written by white teachers who attempted to teach in the inner-city school and experienced frustration and despair as they saw the futility of their efforts. These teachers contend that the endeavors of one or two individuals were to no avail when attacking a problem of such magnitude and complexity. The task of educating the disadvantaged looms large in academic circles and in recent years has received increased attention from psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and educators, all seeking to apply the principles and methodology of their disciplines to solving the problems of educating the culturally disadvantaged.

Since 1940 one of the most significant trends in population shifts has been the in-migration of Negroes to urban centers, especially in the North and West. Acute labor shortages during World War II initiated the movement and prosperity during the post-war period has encouraged the migration to continue. When the black population increased, the existing Negro communities became more congested and spilled over into previously all-white neighborhoods. The immigrants met many problems in the city: employment, housing, welfare, and education. These difficulties were not solely the concern of the newcomers, but the community in which they lived was also very much involved. One problem, that of educating the youth of the inner city,

has, especially in recent years, been of prime concern to the community.

In this study no attempt will be made to offer a solution to the complexities of the inner city, or even to the problem of educating the culturally disadvantaged. The researcher's purpose is to describe the historical development of a secondary school in a working-class community as the student population shifts from almost all white to a half-white and half-black distribution. The school selected as the subject of the study, Thomas Jefferson High School in Portland, Oregon, lends itself exceptionally well to such investigation because the racial change occurred there within a relatively short period of time. The difficulties encountered at Jefferson High School by both the blacks and the school staff are similar to those encountered in the schools of large eastern cities. Because of the smaller number of people involved, however, the intensity and complexity of the problem is not as great as in the East, and consequently is easier to observe.

Since the problem under consideration involves black-white race relations, it is fraught with emotionalism and prejudice. Paying particular attention to discriminatory practices against Negroes in Portland, the historical development of the Oregonians' attitudes toward Negroes is examined.

Closely tied to race relations are social and economic factors. Discriminatory practices in the social and economic sphere of community life controlled where Portland Negroes lived and worked. These restrictive practices contributed to the change in racial composition at Jefferson High School. The socio-economic conditions prevailing in Albina, the area into which the Negro community was allowed to expand, are scrutinized because social problems and school problems are closely interwoven.

CHAPTER I

ALBINA: LOCALE OF JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

In 1908 construction began on Thomas Jefferson High School in the Albina section of Portland, Oregon. When the work was completed two years later, the stark, three-story red brick building stood in the midst of open fields and newly constructed houses. Because the building site was above the street level, its elevation accentuated the height of the structure. The school, as a building, towered over the surrounding modest homes much in the same manner as the school, as an institution, towered over the people in the community. The uncluttered and severe architectural lines of the building's exterior were duplicated within by the strict discipline of the staff and their rigid teaching methods.

Historically this imagery is typical of American secondary schools in the early 1900's. Since most working-class people had not attended high school and were unfamiliar with the school, they regarded it with a certain degree of respect, even awe. Adults in their daily work admired and deferred to the strong authoritarian figure. In like manner, parents and educators accepted the need for strict discipline

and conformity in the school. The school as an institution consequently reflected the attitudes and values of the community.

The image Jefferson High School projects today contrasts sharply with that of sixty years ago. In the late 1950's the school building was re-designed and modernized. Lowering the profile of the structure aided in blending the school with the surrounding community. Slowly at first, but with mounting tempo, changes occurred within its walls. The school as an institution was responding to the needs of the community, to the needs of the people it served. Conditions demanded that the teachers begin practicing instructional methods that de-emphasized the teacher as an authoritarian figure. In place of teacher goals, educators stressed joint endeavor, emphasizing a common goal for both the student and the teacher.

Jefferson High School had served the community of Albina for over sixty years. During these years, the manner in which the school responded to the needs of the people it served was influenced by the values, biases, and attitudes of the residents of the community. The history of the Oregonians' attitudes toward the Negro is especially pertinent because discriminatory practices against Negroes directly affected the transformation of Jefferson High School. To understand the biases and attitudes influencing the change, some examination is needed of the social and economic forces that helped to form the

character of the Portland people, especially those in the Albina section.

Like East Portland, Albina was an independent town prior to 1891, but in that year the two towns merged with Portland under one governing body. Portland, a rough, raw city at the turn of the century, was and still is the largest city on the coast between Seattle, Washington, and San Francisco, California. Its location at the junction of two navigable rivers, the Columbia and the Willamette, and its accessibility to sea-going vessels was ideal for a port city. The fertile Willamette Valley stretches south of the city for 150 miles. Up the Columbia River lies the heart of the great wheat producing "Inland Empire." These rich agricultural lands, in conjunction with the lumbering industry, produced the exports needed for growth of the port city. The development of natural resources such as these, however, is a painstakingly slow task. Portland did not experience a sudden boom like many other western cities with the rapid influx of fortune hunters, prodigal men whose easily acquired wealth and free spending habits made possible the rapid development of a social and economic base for the city.[1] Speculators, especially those interested in land and transportation facilities, represented only a small percentage of the early population.

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[1]Lee A. Dillon, "The Portland Public School System From 1873 to 1913" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1928), p. 4.

The majority of the early settlers, who came from the frontier regions of the upper Midwest, had limited economic resources.[2] Perseverance, thrift, and hard work were the assets upon which they depended in settling the area.

As population and production increased in Portland, exports increased, and in turn the manufactured imports arriving by ship multiplied. The city became a major distribution center on the west coast for wholesaling, and the trans-shipping business flourished. In 1910 Portland ranked the 28th city in size in the United States, but it was 55th in the value of its manufactured products. It is estimated that Portland merchants sold 80 per cent of all their goods in an area of 136,768 square miles in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.[3]

The growing importance of commerce and the steady work offered by railroad shops and shipyards attracted a large number of stable family men to the city. Demand for transient labor by the timber companies, wheat ranches, and construction firms continued, but the men with families increased at a more rapid rate. Since they were

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[2]Lee A. Dillon, "Public Schools of Portland, Oregon, From 1877-1882" (unpublished manuscript, University of Oregon, n.d.), p. 1.

[3]Report of the Survey of the Public School System of School District No. 1. Multnomah County, Oregon, City of Portland, Richard W. Montague, Chairman (Portland, Oregon: School Board, 1913), pp. 78-79. Herinafter cited as Survey of School District No. 1.

permanent residents of the area, they influenced community development because they were interested in establishing a desirable city in which to raise their families. But the characteristics of the population were still, in 1910, typical of a newly-settled area. Males and unmarried adults outnumbered family units. Portland had a greater percentage than average of her population in the 25 to 44 year range and markedly fewer persons in the 5 to 14 year range. (See Figure 1.) The percentage of children in Portland in the 6 to 14 year range in 1910 was 10.7 compared with the all city average in the United States of 13.2; the children under 15 years of age comprised only 18.8 per cent of the population as compared with 27.3 per cent, the average for all cities in the United States.[4]

Such a population composition and age distribution affected the city school system. The effect is even more evident when the school census of 1900 is compared to that of 1910. According to the 1900 school census, 20,462 children were in the school age range, whereas in 1910 38,813 or almost double the number of children were in this range. A comparison of the high school daily attendance figures are:

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[4]Ibid., pp. 76-77; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Population, Vol. III (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 510.

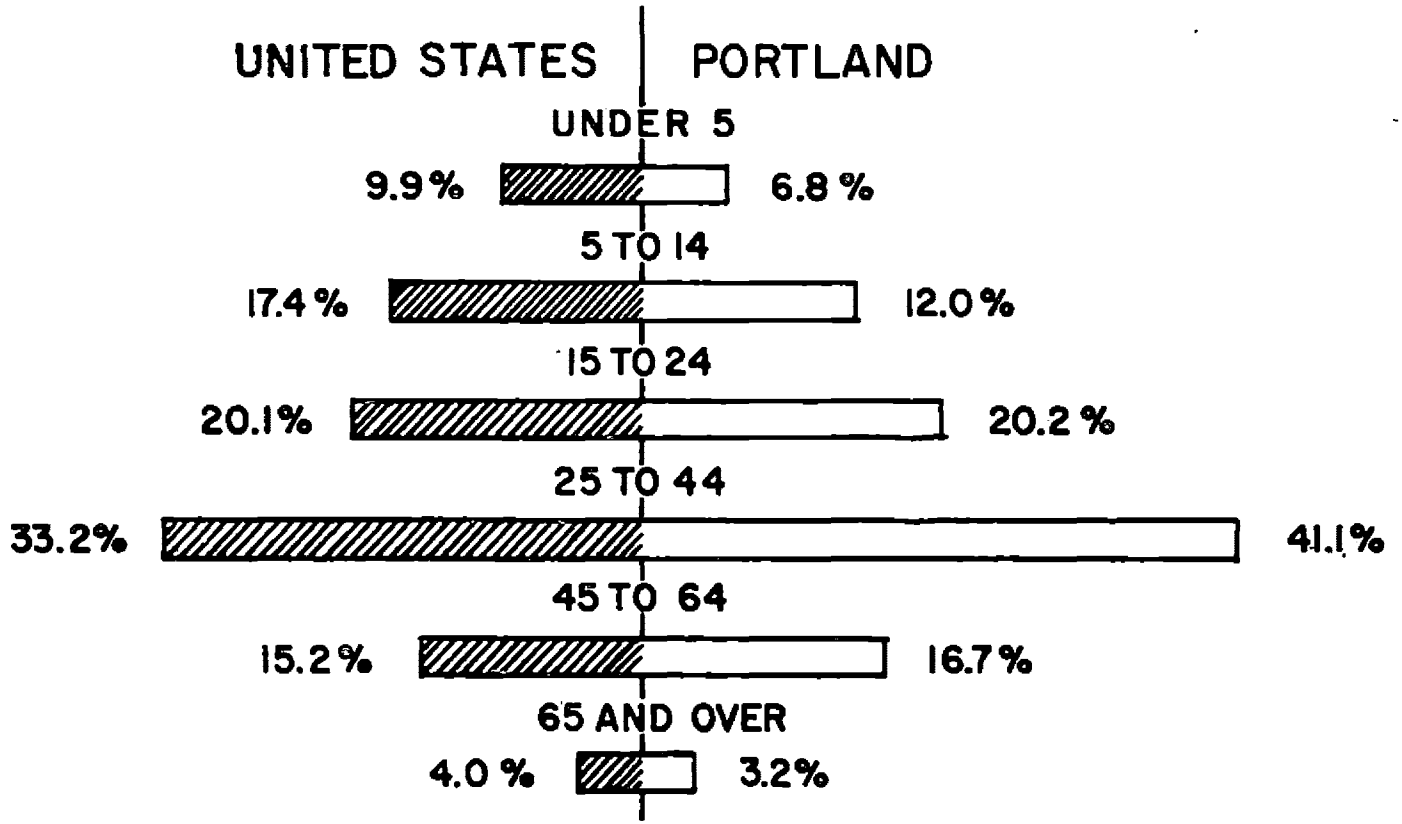

Fig. 1.--Age distribution of the population: 1910
(Source: Survey of School District No. 1)

696.4 in 1900 as compared with 2,029.5 in 1910.[5] Although in 1910 the number of children in Portland was less than the national average for cities, their rate of increase created an educational problem.

Portland had rather suddenly become a large city; its educational facilities were not adequate to accommodate the rapidly increasing number of young people. The city fathers began in the first decade of the 1900's to correct the deficiency in educational facilities. With an increase in the number of school age children, the demand for secondary education also grew. The upsurge in secondary education felt throughout the United States in like manner influenced the attitudes and actions of the school directors. Portland High School, on the west side of the Willamette River, was organized in 1869, but operated without its own separate building until 1885.[6] This single school satisfied the need for a public high school until 1906 when the city built the East Side High School (the name was changed in 1909 to Washington High School). Two years later, in 1908, construction began on

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[5]Dillon, "The Portland Public School System From 1873 to 1913," p. 34.

[6]Alfred Powers and Howard M. Corning (ed.), History of Education in Portland (Portland, Oregon: WPA Adult Education Program of the State System of Higher Education, 1937), pp. 74, 85.

Jefferson High School in the Albina district. Classes were held in the building even prior to its completion in 1910.[7]

Sheer numbers of students did not require the building of this third high school so soon after the second, for Washington High School had an initial enrollment of only 369 students.[8] Other factors such as civic pride as well as the geographic location of the existing schools were factors in the building of Jefferson High School.

Civil pride was especially influential. Prior to consolidation, Albina had been an independent town, as had East Portland and Portland. With the construction of East Side High School, both Portland and the community that had been East Portland had their own secondary schools. The Albina community was eager to follow their example. Within the prosperous city, competition was keen among the various communities for facilities that would assist in attracting new businesses and residents. Availability of a high school would greatly enhance Albina's position in the competition.

A second factor, the geographic location of the existing high schools, was a strong point in an argument for a school in the northern section of the city. A look at Figure 2 will reveal that the city of Portland in 1910 was unequally divided by the Willamette River. The

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[7]Ibid., p. 182.

[8]Ibid., p. 180.

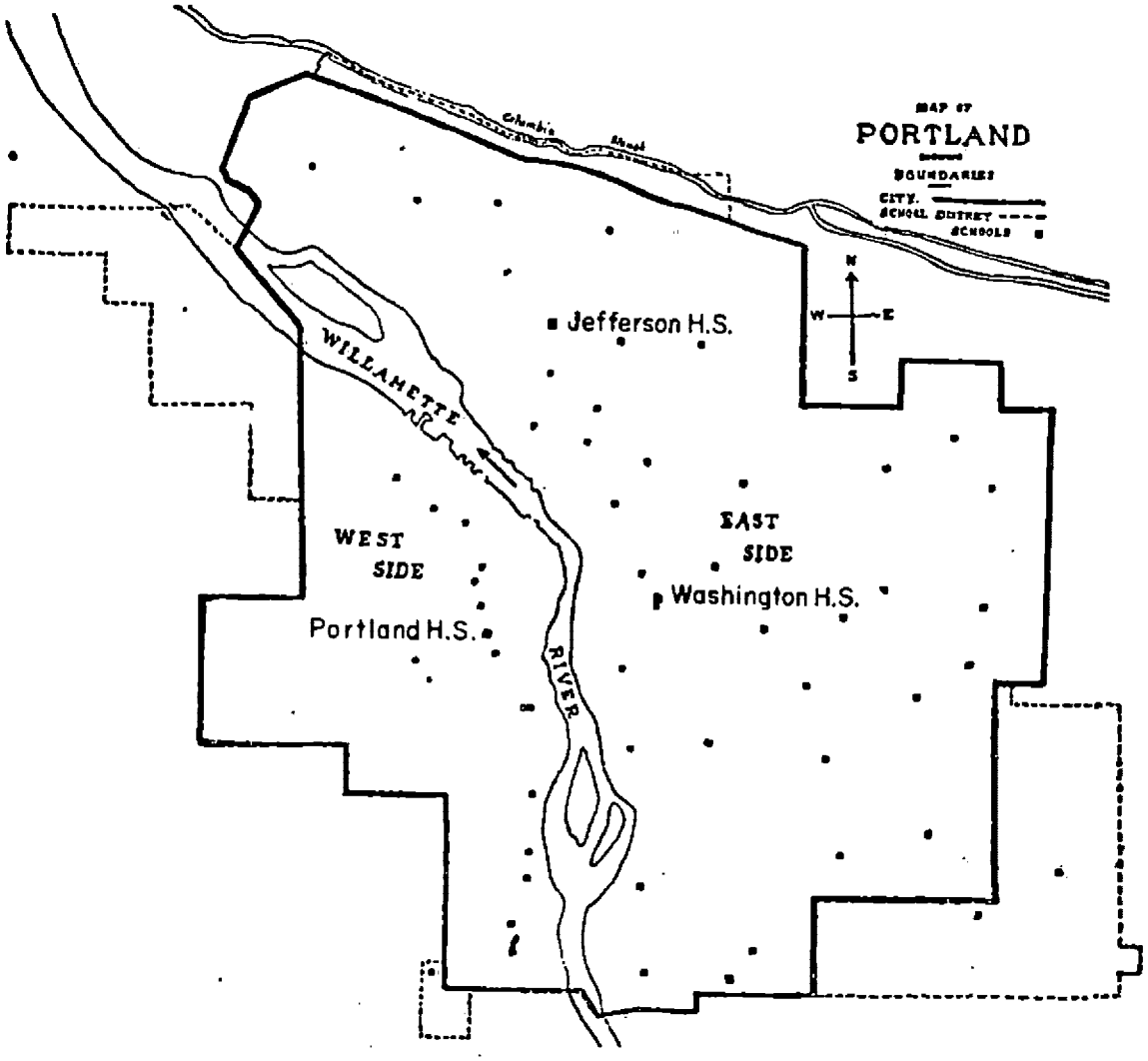

Fig. 2.--Location of Portland's High Schools: 1913
(Source: Survey of School District No. 1)

city consisted of an area of fifty-four square miles, only about one-fifth of which lay on the west side of the river and the remaining four-fifths on the east. The elementary schools were strategically situated throughout the city to reduce the distance the children had to walk to school and to accommodate growing areas. A continuation of this neighborhood school policy is demonstrated by the location of the three high schools. With Jefferson High in the northern section, Washington High School in the east side of the city, and Portland High School on the west side of the river, the school district greatly increased the availability of service to the public. The new site was chosen with future expansion in mind. Elwood P. Cubberley, dean of education at Stanford, conducted a school survey in 1913 for the Portland district. He approved of the site chosen for Jefferson High School because it was well located geographically for expected city growth and the school facilities could expand without crowding the students.[9]

All indications were that the city would expand to the north and to the east, as was the case. Expanding industrial and commercial enterprises just east of the Willamette River would not only serve to reduce the number of children in the Washington attendance area, but also would provide more work for men living on the east side.

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[9]Ellwood P. Cubberley et al., The Portland Survey (New York: World Book Company, 1915), p. 294.

Cubberley's survey showed a constant migration of people from the west side to the east side. Close to the west bank of the Willamette River, the area was rapidly changing from a residential to an industrial, commercial, and shipping center, thus causing a population shift. Many of those who moved were workers with small incomes, but they were making installment payments on modest homes of their own in the residential section of the Albina area.[10]

In 1913 a writer for the school district survey confidently claimed that the population of Portland had reached 250,000 and the estimate of 1,000,000 within twenty-five to thirty years and a doubling in population in fifty years seemed entirely reasonable.[11] The composition of the population in 1910 was considered by members of the survey to be exceptionally favorable from an educational standpoint.[12] The population was:

> . . . characterized by a high percentage of the native-born, a foreign-born population drawn largely from the stronger and more intelligent national stocks, and an almost entire absence of negroes . . . . The large Teutonic element among the foreign-born is a noticeable feature, and it is even larger among the native-born of foreign parentage.[13]

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[10]Survey of School District No. 1, pp. 217-18.

[11]Ibid., p. 71.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., pp. 71, 73.

This population mix could be expected to change, however, with the opening of the Panama Canal and the increase of immigrants from south and east Europe.[14] Figure 3 shows that 75 per cent of the population was indeed native-born of native parents or native-born with one or both parents foreign-born.

Two biases, nativism and place of birth, were not always apparent in the political and social attitudes of Portland residents. Beneath the surface, however, they influenced the conduct of the people. Periodically these elements surfaced, causing an eruption in the form of a wave of emotionalism. The foreign-born element, which consisted of about 25 per cent of the population, tended to settle in separate "pockets" or sections throughout the city. The Orientals, for instance, were crowded close to the business district along both sides of the river. They shared these most undesirable accommodations with the few Negroes of the city, but did not associate with them. A large number of European-born immigrants lived in various sections of Albina, the workingman's district. Albina was Portland's melting pot. Before World War I shut off the stream of immigrants from Europe, a score of persons of different nationalities lived there and became workers for

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[14] Ibid., p. 73.

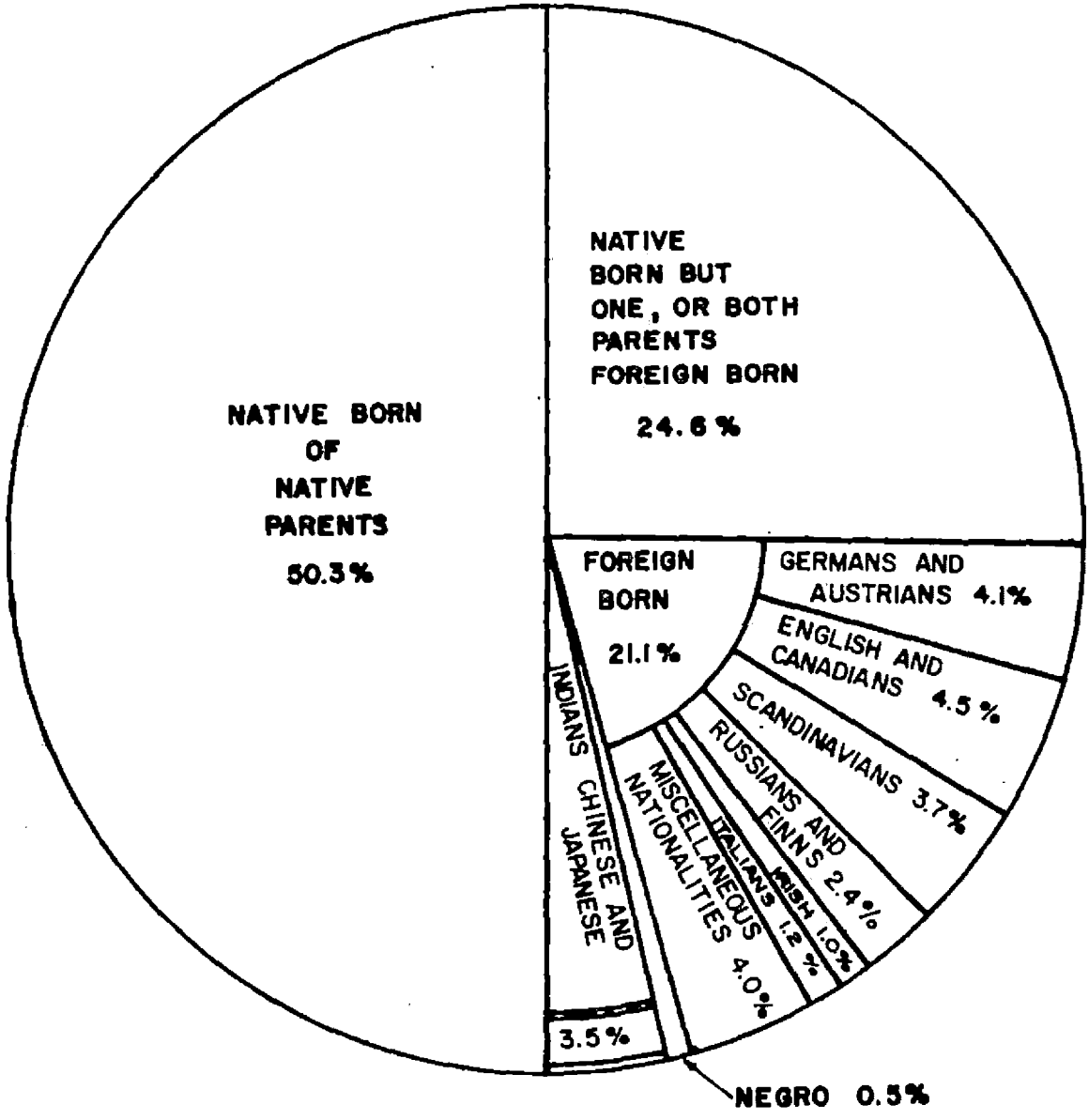

Fig. 3.--Elements of Portland's Population: 1910
(Source: Survey of School District No. 1)

the forests and mines.[15] The immigrant in the melting pot went through a process of acculturation; a process of constant adjustment to his value system and to his religious, political, social, and educational views and practices.[16] In America the newcomer learned that the common man is important, but that success depended upon self-improvement. The pinnacle of success could be reached through chicanery or politics by some people, but perseverence, thrift, hard work, and education were solutions for the majority. Thus the immigrants and the native-born settlers in Oregon accepted, to a degree, similar goals and values and the means of their achievement.

The economic status of the native-born and the immigrants living in Albina were similar. Jefferson High School served families which ranged from the poor to the comfortably well-to-do. The latter were pioneer-established families whose breadwinners were small businessmen or supervisors. The vast majority of the wage earners were working men employed in nearby railroad shops, shipyards, and commercial enterprises. Edwin Russell, manager of the Portland branch

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[15]Walter Mattila review of Finnish Immigrants in America, 1880-1920, by A. William Hoglund in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XLI (September, 1960), p. 351.

[16]Ibid.; The various theories relating to Americanizing the immigrant are analyzed by Merton Gordon in Assimilation in American Life. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

of the Bank of British Columbia, founded the town of Albina as a speculative venture because the location appeared to be well suited for industrial use.[17] The early shipyards, lumber mills, and docking facilities were soon followed by other enterprises. By the time Jefferson High School was built, there were nearby dry docks, cooperage works, flour mills, woolen mills, meat packing companies, and grain storage elevators as well as similarly related industries. In Albina the Portland Railway Light and Power Company erected the largest and most completely equipped car barns in the Northwest. The company operated the electric street cars in Portland and employed about 300 men in and about the car barns.[18]

Boosters of the area describe Albina in 1909 as a thriving community. Lower Albina was, for the most part, devoted to manufacturing industries, railroad yards, machine shops, etc. In Central Albina, the home of the retail district, the streets were lined with substantial brick buildings three and four stories high. The intersection

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[17]Letter from George H. Himes to Miss Esther Kelly, Reed College, Portland, Oregon, dated April 21, 1915. Mr. Himes was curator of the Oregon Historical Society. Oregon Historical Society Library, Portland, Oregon.

[18]Peninsula Publishing Company (Compiler and editor), The Peninsula: A Special Publication Giving Glimpses of Greater Portland and St. Johns (Portland, Oregon: Peninsula Publishing Company, 1909), p. 77. Oregon Historical Society Collection. Herinafter cited as The Peninsula.

of Russell and Williams Avenues was just one of the several business districts. There were department stores, markets, theaters, office buildings, and retail stores large and small along Russell Street, Williams Avenue, and Killingsworth.[10] Kennard and Adams, a large department store located on Williams Avenue just north of Russell Street, made deliveries by horse-drawn wagons all over the east side.[20] Doctors, lawyers, and dentists maintained offices in Albina and served the area. Albina then was quite self-sufficient. Although the electric street cars connected the district to downtown Portland, the needs of most of the people were supplied locally. The building of Jefferson High School was an additional factor contributing to the region's self-sufficiency. The promoters of Albina had organized the "Push Club" and used the erection of Jefferson as a factor to attract new industry and residents. They published: "One very great and important feature to this district, and a widespread area besides, is the location at this point, an erection of the largest and most modern high school building to be found in the entire West. This structure is to cost $350,000 and will cover two blocks of ground."[21]

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Lawrence Pratt, Portland, My City (Portland, Oregon: Worthylake Press, 1967), p. 82.

[21] The Peninsula, p. 77.

A rapidly growing area, Albina appealed to the owners of new factories and business enterprises. Workingmen were attracted to the district because it offered jobs and the opportunity to live close to their work. With the usual amenities a community offers, including the new Jefferson High School, Albina had a strong competitive position for attracting new residents.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL, 1900-1940

A change in thinking concerning the social value of education was in evidence for ten or fifteen years prior to the building of Jefferson High School in Albina. Throughout the United States as well as in Portland, Oregon, a slow but continuous movement toward democratizing secondary education was in progress. The result of these efforts in Portland was the dramatic tripling of the number of public secondary schools in less than five years, culminating with the completion of Jefferson High School in 1910.

The spectacular growth of public high schools began during the latter part of the nineteenth century when public high schools were competing for students with private schools and academies. Charles N. Reynolds cites the period from 1891 to 1907 ". . . as the period of keen competition [in Portland] between the private and public secondary schools, with the victory going to the latter." The following period from 1908 to 1921 ". . . witnessed the rapid increase in secondary education in Portland and the complete dominance in the field

by the public school."[1] At the turn of the century then, Portland children whose parents could afford the tuition, attended the Hill Military Academy, the Portland Academy, or any one of the several church-sponsored schools. The less affluent attended the public high school, or more likely after the eighth grade, went into the labor force. But using as a precedent the Kalamazoo case of 1872, which made tax monies available for the public high school, more parents demanded that their children have an opportunity to attend secondary school. Portland participated in the tremendous nationwide increase in the percentage of its population attending secondary schools and also in the growing interest in special vocational education.[2]

By the turn of the century, the high schools had taken over functions which were previously performed by the grammar school and the academy. The high school curriculum was so designed to prepare the student for either college or for life in the world of work.[3] By 1910 educators believed that the high school curriculum had been broadened to meet the needs of a wide range of students. They attributed the

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[1]Charles N. Reynolds, "The History of Secondary Schools in Oregon" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1921), p. 27.

[2]Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[3]John E. Brown, The American High School (New York: Macmillan Company, 1911), p. 33.

changes in curriculum to the more liberal university entrance requirements. The previous doctrine, "That which is good for the preparation for college is good preparation for life," had been changed to "What is good preparation for life is also good preparation for college."[4] Prior to World War I and even into the 1930's, most people believed that high school was sufficient education. The professions required a college degree, but work in most commercial and business firms did not.

Some of Portland's educators, agreeing with those who were changing high school curriculum, made similar changes in the Portland school program. A glance at Figure 4 shows that Jefferson's curriculum in 1912-13 reflects the aim of the school, at least in design, to meet the needs of all its students.[5] The educational purposes of Jefferson High School then were two-fold--to prepare the students for college or for the labor market.

Although it appears that wide latitude was permitted in course offerings, Elwood Cubberley, in 1913, sharply criticized the school district for the rigidity in its secondary school courses. The

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[4]Ibid.; From a vantage point of forty-odd years, Krug views Brown's ideas as wishful thinking. The wide discrepancy between preparation for life and preparation for college widened after 1911. Edward A. Krug, The Shaping of the American High School (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 303.

[5]Note teacher preparation.

Courses	Terms							
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth
English	English:—Literature, Composition, Rhetoric and Grammar throughout the course							
Latin	Hist.: Greek and Oriental	Roman	Mediaeval	Modern	English	English	American	American
German	Science: Physiogr'phy	Physiogr'phy	Zoology or Botany	Physiology or Botany	Physics	Physics	Chemistry	Chemistry
Scientific	Mathematics: Algebra	Algebra	Algebra	Plane Geometry	Plane Geometry	Solid Geometry	Trigometry	Higher Algebra
College Prep.	Latin: Lessons	Latin Lessons	Caesar	Caesar	Cicero	Cicero	Virgil	Virgil and Ovid
	German:—Grammar, Reading and Composition throughout the course							
Teaching Course	Art	Art	Art	Art	Psychology	Psychology	Principles of Teaching	Principles of Teaching
Dressmaking Course	Art	Art	Art	Art	Bookkeeping	Bookkeeping		
	Dressmaking or Cooking	Dressmaking or Cooking	Dressmaking	Dressmaking	Dressmaking	Dressmaking	Dressmaking	Dressmaking
Domestic Science Course	Drawing	Drawing	Drawing	Drawing				
	Cooking	Cooking and Elementary Bacteriology	Sewing	Sewing	Sewing	Sewing	Home Economics	Elementary Dietetics
Man'l Train. Course	Shop Work and Drawing throughout course			French or German throughout course				
Commercial Courses	Money and Correspond.			Com'l Products and Local History	Commercial Geography	Com'l and Parliament'y Law	Political Economy	Commerce and Finance
	Penmanship	Typewriting	Shorthand and Typewriting	Shorthand and Typewriting	Shorthand and Typewriting	Shorthand and Typewriting	Shorthand and Typewriting	Shorthand and Typewriting
		Business Bookkeeping and Practice	Business Bookkeeping and Practice	Business Bookkeeping and Practice	Business Bookkeeping and Practice			
	Com'l Arith.	Com'l Arith.						

Fig. 4.--Jefferson High School Courses of Study, 1912-13
(Source: Survey of School District No. 1)

administration required absolute uniformity. Jefferson High School, for instance, could not offer a course of study unless it was also offered at the other two schools. Such rules prevented an individual school from taking full advantage of special circumstances that could benefit the student.[6]

The superintendent of schools at the time of the survey was Frank Rigler, described as having a very strong "force of character." He dominated the school system, and the story is told ". . . that at any time of any day in the term he could sit in his office and know just what page in what book was being done at the time in every school in the city."[7] When the leader of a school system displays rigidity to this extent, many of his co-workers are likely to be intimidated into following his actions. Cubberley was distressed because he saw this rigidity manifested in the teachers' primary interest in teaching subject matter to those pupils who were capable of learning it, and in their having little or no concern for teaching the pupil as an individual human being.[8] The survey was sharply critical of the Portland school system and many of the comments and suggestions reflect educational

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[6]Survey of School District No. 1, p. 120.

[7]Dillon, "The Portland Public School System from 1873-1913," p. 26.

[8]Survey of School District No. 1, p. 168.

ideas of some advanced thinkers of the period. Principal criticisms were that the schools were not taking advantage of the child's life experiences; the development of the physical body was being neglected while the mental processes were developed; the individuality of the child was ignored; the work in school did not relate with life outside the school; and that greater emphasis should be placed on vocational guidance to aid the youth in selecting a course of study to prepare him for a happy and useful life. Following the survey, a change in the school district administration occurred, but even Cubberley's assurance that Portland could have the nation's finest school system with some changes in administrative policy and an increase in the school budget, failed to alter substantially the existing practices.

Portland's school survey, among the first conducted in the United States, caused a reaction within the community that was typical of later occurrences. Marked interest was shown both by members of the press and of the community during the study. Survey staff members, in a critical analysis of the system, submitted well-thought-out recommendations and proposals for improvements. Then--nothing happened. Perhaps a change in the system was too much to expect. Throughout the survey, most of the discrepancies in the schools could be traced to the decision-makers on the school board. To comply with the recommendations, members of the school board would have to

relinquish much of their power, and this they did not do. A larger issue, the war in Europe, obscured the school's problem and pushed school reform into the background. Regional and sectional affairs became secondary when the problems of the United States and Americanism became of primary concern.

At the outbreak of the war in Europe, even though only approximately twenty-five per cent of the population in Portland was foreign-born, feelings of extreme patriotism ran high. The United States' entry into World War I created an irrational reaction against anything German, and the emotional manifestation of "Americanism." For example, in Jefferson High School the study of the German language, long a primary language for the college preparatory course, was dropped. German was not to appear in the curriculum again until 1927 after the emotional upheaval of "Americanism" had subsided.

Nationalistic fervor caused the school board to appoint the former superintendent of schools, L. R. Alderman, to head a newly-created department entitled War Work Activities. The newspaper editor expected the new department to ". . . form an important feature of the school work during the period before and following the end of the war."[9] A reporter in the Oregon Journal states that the acting superintendent of

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[9]Oregon Journal, August 11, 1918.

schools, D. A. Grout, believed that children should be taught American ideals first. "America first is his hobby; he does not believe in a 'made-in-Europe' education."[10] Jefferson students were kept active in school with thrift stamps and war gardens while the "super" patriots preached Americanism. Although World War I came to an end in November of 1918, not until the end of the school year in 1920 could the superintendent of schools report that, "During the past year the schools have been able to resume work along normal lines."[11]

The cited incident of fanatical "Americanism" is but one of many instances of bigotry that appears periodically in Portland's history. Negroes were the early scapegoats of the residents and have so continued to the present day. At the turn of the century, and again in 1941 when all the Japanese were evacuated from the area, the Oriental came under especially strong attack. Emotionalism and intolerance rose to great heights during the "anti-Red" campaign following World War I. That upsurge culminated in 1922 when the Ku Klux Klan, with a campaign based on anti-Catholicism and anti "foreign-element," swept into most of the political offices in the city

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Powers and Corning, History of Education in Portland, p. 231.

and the state.[12] The thread of prejudice which runs through the history of Portland has influenced many of the city's institutions, including the public schools.

Schools in Portland reflected the attitudes and feelings of the period and were subject to the vicissitudes of the communities they served. During the war years, nationalism swept through the city and the schools were used as centers to promote Americanism. Teaching democracy and the intricacies of our government had long been expected of our schools, but the Americanism emphasized in Portland during the war and in the early 1920's was very different. Even during the war years, the tenor was ethnocentric--as much anti-Europe as anti-German.[13] Peace in Europe eliminated the war as a focal point for the emotional display of nationalism in Portland and the schools discontinued the wartime program and returned to normal operation.

In the late 1920's with 2,300 students, Jefferson was one of the larger schools in the city. Under the direction of Hopkins Jenkins, it developed a reputation both for academic quality and athletic prowess. Jenkins believed that each child in the school had at least

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[12]Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 200; James D. Diegler, "Epilogue to Progressivism: Oregon, 1920-1924," (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Oregon, 1958), p. 3.

[13]Oregon Journal, August 11, 1918.

one area in which he could excell. He contended that the purpose of the school was to aid the student in developing this resource and at the same time help him to learn those attributes that are necessary to lead a happy and useful life.[14]

Although Jefferson was not a trade school or a commercial high school, some of the faculty stated that, though not a part of the formal curriculum, the school provided considerable vocational education to those students desiring it. Jefferson's printing press and the advanced typing classes are two of the examples cited. The press was used to do most of the printing for the school district. Although a formal class was not offered, many pupils had opportunities to obtain training in the printing trade. Students in advanced typing classes cut stencils for material used in the school and for many years did the typing and layout work for the school yearbook, The Spectrum.[15] A study conducted in 1933 found the commercial courses offered at Jefferson to be superior in quality to those given by the High School of Commerce.[16]

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[14]Pratt, Portland, My City, p. 25.

[15]Interview with a teacher who was at Jefferson High School during the late 1920's and the 1930's. January 14, 1970.

[16]Loris C. Oglesby, "An Analytical Study of Some of the Problems of Oregon High Schools" (unpublished Master's thesis, Oregon State Agricultural College, 1933), p. 22.

Most of the students graduating from Jefferson High School who were not going to college sought employment in and around Portland, but during the 1930's many were unable to find jobs or were under-employed. The lack of job opportunities kept many Albina youths in school who would otherwise have taken work had a job been available. The National Youth Administration provided limited work opportunities in the schools enabling many Jefferson students to continue their education. A further aid to the youth of the country was the Civilian Conservation Corps which provided a haven for boys who were not in school. School officials and the public were not, however, as concerned in the 1930's about a student dropping out of high school as they were to become in the post World War II period.

Because so little emphasis was placed on the importance of retaining a student in school, the administration often used expulsion as a method of handling the dissident student. The student was expected to conform to the rules and regulations of the institution or he was expelled. Jenkins' continuous use of a pet cliche, "There are no bad boys," put the burden of disciplining the wayward students at Jefferson on his vice-principal and the teachers.[17] By the standards of the 1960's, Jefferson was in the 1930's an extremely strict school with

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[17]Pratt, Portland, My City, p. 28.

the roles of the teacher and the student clearly defined. Since the student was in the school to learn, he would accomplish his objective by doing exactly what the teacher told him. Complete compliance was expected, and for the most part received. As one informant states, "I sometimes agreed with the students that the teacher was unreasonable, but I said to them, 'You are going to have to work for a boss who is unreasonable too. You might just as well learn to accept the facts of life and get along.'"[18] The weight of parental authority was also behind the school officials, since parents accepted as fact that the teachers knew what they were doing and believed that the child should learn to respect authority. Boys who were in Jefferson at the time state that if they were punished in school for some misdeed and their parents learned about it, they would also be punished at home.

Although discipline was not a major problem at Jefferson, some of the new teachers during the 1930's were surprised that so many of the boys had police records. The vice-principal dealt with the school problems and police visits usually stemmed from some activity outside the school.[19] The most serious incident within the school occurred between a boy from another school and a Jefferson student. Following

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[18]Interview with a teacher who was at Jefferson High School during the 1930's. January 14, 1970.

[19]Pratt, Portland, My City, p. 28.

an altercation over the attention of a girl, the jealous boy from the other school shot and killed the Jefferson student in the hallway on the second floor.[20] Incidents of such a serious nature were unusual, however, and the majority of the disciplinary problems were of less consequence. To most of the students the school, with all its regulations, did not loom as a threat.

During his long tenure at Jefferson, Hopkins Jenkins always welcomed at the school the parents of the students and the community adults. As principal for over thirty years, he continually worked for what he considered a good education for his students. Staff members remember him as autocratic and rigid in some of his demands. Some of the faculty viewed his relationship with the students as paternalistic; the others saw it as permissive. Independently well-to-do, he administered a school because he was interested in girls and boys and wanted to work with them. His affluence perhaps also accounts for his lack of interest in rising in the administrative hierarchy. Intensely loyal to Jefferson High School, he instilled in others a strong sense of belonging and a fierce pride in being a part of the school. During his administration, long tenure for teachers at Jefferson became commonplace. At the twenty-fifth anniversary of the school's construction,

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[20] Ibid., p. 28.

The Oregon Journal pictured Jenkins surrounded by a large number of his original staff.[21]

Because Jenkins believed that character and the spirit of competitiveness were best developed on the playing fields, he encouraged athletics. During the 1930's, the school produced consistently fine athletic teams that competed with the surrounding high schools. The community backed its team and turned out large crowds to cheer the "Jefferson Democrats" on to victory. The game with the arch-rival, Grant High School, could always be counted upon to provide excitement. The over-enthusiasm of the spectators contributed to the foundation in 1937 of the Jefferson Dads' Club. The members assisted at athletic events and helped to maintain order in and around the stands. In addition, they sponsored the musical festival and other events connected with the school. Money earned by these endeavors was spent on equipment and apparatus for the school rather than on a scholarship fund as they had originally considered. By the former method, the Dads believed that more students at Jefferson would benefit from the money.[22]

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[21] Oregon Journal, March 18, 1934, p. 6.

[22] Interview with Charles L. Jones, teacher and principal at Jefferson High School. December 5, 1969.

A shortage of money limited the activities of most of the Jefferson students to their immediate neighborhood and school. Well prepared drama and music events at the school were attended by the adults in the community as well as the students. The school clubs were also important social features. They were of two varieties, the "open" club and the "bid" club. "Open" clubs that welcomed anyone who wanted to join, brought together students with similar interests to collect stamps, play chess, and hike. "Bid" clubs operated like a fraternity or sorority in that only a select few could belong to a particular club. The "bid" clubs, social in nature, were to come under sharp criticism later when the number of Negro students at Jefferson increased.

By the outbreak of World War II, Jefferson High School served as a focal point for youth activities and social events within the immediate area and it represented the local community in city-wide athletic competition. The relatively homogeneous student population contributed to the absence of undue friction and conflicting interest within the school. Although their families' economic status varied to some degree, in the main most students came from working-class homes. The student population was, however, overwhelmingly Caucasian with a few Orientals and even fewer Negroes. Such proportions continued to represent the Jefferson attendance area until after

World War II when the composition of Albina began to change. With the influx of the nation's largest minority group, the Negro, Jefferson High School would begin to serve a different clientele.

CHAPTER III

NEGRO PIONEERS: ANTECEDENTS OF ALBINA'S BLACK COMMUNITY

The sharp increase in the need for labor during World War II accounts for the vast majority of Negroes in Portland, but the forerunners of Albina's black community were present in Oregon's earliest written records. Although their numbers were few, Oregon's early black settlers and the Negro issue had a profound effect on the political and social thought during the state's formative years. These effects, still in evidence in the middle of the twentieth century, are particularly apparent to those seeking to solve the problems of the inner city and of the education of Portland's disadvantaged youth.

The early records of the Pacific Northwest contain a few entries concerning the presence of Negroes, but the brief accounts seldom give much information about individuals. In those days the Negroes, for the most part without status, were engaged in menial tasks such as domestic servants or farm hands. For this reason there was seldom occasion to record their activities. Probably the earliest reference to a Negro was in the journal of Captain Robert Gray which contained an account of his expedition in 1787-88 to the coast of the Pacific Northwest. Gray reports the presence of a Negro crew member, Marcus Lopeus, who was

his personal servant. While the ship was anchored in Tillamook Bay, Lopeus went ashore as a member of a working party to gather grass for livestock kept on board the vessel. He carelessly stuck his cutlass into the ground, and an Indian seized it and made off with the weapon. The Negro gave chase, but was set upon by a group of Indians and slain.[1]

According to Indian legends, Negroes were in Oregon at an even earlier date, approximately 1720. The story, as told by the Indians, is that sailors from a Spanish ship brought a treasure chest ashore to bury. To safeguard the treasure from the superstitious Indians, they killed and buried the body of a Negro crewman with the treasure chest.[2]

In 1803-04, a Negro named York accompanied the Lewis and Clark Expedition as a servant of Captain William Clark. The presence of the Negro aroused great excitement among the Indians. "Some of the party had also told the Indians that we had a man with us who was black and had short curling hair, this had excited their curiosity very much and they seemed quite as anxious to see this monster as they

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[1]Hubert H. Bancroft, History of the Pacific States of North America. Vol. XXII: The Northwest Coast, 1543-1800 (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Company, Publishers, 1884), p. 189.

[2]Howard M. Corning (ed.), Dictionary of Oregon History (Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, Publisher, 1956), p. 174.

wer [sic] the merchandise which we had to barter for their horses."[3] York was an early explorer in Oregon but did not, as indicated in some accounts, remain in the West.[4]

Daniel G. Hill believes that a number of Negroes came West over the Oregon Trail, but writes, "The reading of a number of wagon train diaries fails to reveal more than mention by name of the presence of these people. References are made to 'Jim, our Negro slave,' 'Annie,' and so on . . . . With such laconic statements as 'John, our Negro slave, died today,' the presence of Negroes with the wagon trains is established."[5]

The names of two other Negroes in early Oregon, those of James D. Sauls and Winslow, alias Winslow Anderson, are recorded. The former, a cook aboard the U. S. sloop-of-war Peacock, deserted after

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[3]Ruben Gold Thwaites (ed.), Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806, Vol. II (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1904), p. 358.

[4]Earlier writers erroneously stated that York remained in the West and settled near the junction of the Big Horn and Stinking River (now Shoshone River) in Montana. There is no evidence that York did not return to Missouri and remain with the Clark family. The Negro living with the Crow Indians in Montana was Edward Rose, a mulatto, who went upon the Missouri River in 1807 with Manuel Lisa and remained with the Crows to become a leader of influence with that tribe. John C. Evers (ed.), Adventures of Zenas Leonard, Fur Trader (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), p. 52.

[5]Daniel G. Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1932), p. 5.

the ship went aground and broke up on a sand spit near the mouth of the Columbia River.[6] The latter came to Oregon from California with Ewing Young on a cattle drive in about 1834.[7] Sauls and Winslow are known because in 1844 they quarreled with a Wasco Indian over the ownership of a horse. In the fracas an Indian was killed, and the incident created tension between the Indians and the settlers. According to Marie Bradley, this disturbance may have offered an immediate excuse for the passage of the Negro exclusion act of that year in the Oregon Country.[8]

Since the Oregon Country was over a thousand miles from the South, one might assume it to be exempt from the problems of slavery and free Negroes, but such was not the case. Most inhabitants of Oregon were Americans, although outside the jurisdiction of the United States government, they were still emotionally involved with the political and economic problems of the country. Naturally, then, when they organized a government, the issue of slavery and free Negroes was bound to arise.

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[6]"Negro Pioneers: Their Page in Oregon History," Oregon Native Son, I (January, 1900), 432.

[7]Kenneth L. Holmes, Ewing Young, Master Trapper (Portland: Binfords and Mort, Publishers, 1967), pp. 97, 175.

[8]Marie M. Bradley, "Political Beginnings in Oregon," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, IX (March, 1908), 58.

A covenant-type government--already a tradition for American settlers--took form in 1841. The Legislative Committee of the Provisional Government presented to the general meeting on July 5, 1843, the "First Organic Law." One of the provisions of this act was the prohibition of slavery.

The following spring, the Legislative Committee revealed its strong anti-Negro bias in "An Act in Regard to Slavery and Free Negroes and Mulattoes." Slavery or involuntary servitude was again prohibited in Oregon. Owners were allowed three years in which to remove their slaves from the territory. Those slaves remaining in Oregon beyond the period of grace were declared free.

Thus far the act appears to be a humane and liberal effort to halt the ownership of slaves by Oregon's early settlers. Reading the remainder of the law, its actual intent is apparent--to rid Oregon of Negroes. The act protected the slave owner by allowing him ample time to remove his slave property from the state. Free Negroes in the area, as well as those few slaves who were not removed, were the most adversely affected by the act. The freed slave lost the protection of his former owner, and with the other Negroes, stood alone to face a harsh expulsion law.

Section 4 of the act dealt with the Free Negro and mulatto, and was neither liberal nor humane. The act decreed ". . . that when any

free Negro or mulatto shall have come to Oregon he or she . . . shall remove from and leave the country." Males were given two years in which to comply and females three years. The punishment for non-compliance was:

> Sec. 6. That if any such free negro or mulatto shall fail to quit the country as required by this act, he or she may be arrested upon a warrant issued by some justice of the peace, and, if guilty upon trial before such justice, shall receive upon his or her bare back not less than twenty nor more than thirty-nine stripes, to be inflicted by the constable of the proper county.
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> Sec. 7. That if any free negro or mulatto shall fail to quit the country within the term of six months after receiving such stripes, he or she shall again receive the same punishment once in every six months until he or she shall quit the country.[9]

In the December session the Legislative Committee repealed sections six and seven pertaining to corporal punishment. The amended law required that the justice of the peace hire out the free Negro to the person who would be obligated, under bond, to remove the Negro from the country. If he promised to perform this service, the person would be entitled to the labors of the Negro for a specified period of time. The justice was to award to the lowest bidder the task of removing the Negro.[10]

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[9]J. Henry Brown, Political History of Oregon: Provisional Government (Portland, Oregon: Wiley B. Allen, Publisher, 1892), pp. 133-135.

[10]Ibid.

There is no evidence that the law was enforced, and in the following year, 1845, it was repealed in toto.[11]

Various reasons are offered to account for this harsh discrimination. Bradley states, "Many of the settlers were from slave states; too poor to be plantation owners, they saw the evils of poverty and of slavery, and they could not look with complaisance upon free negroes and they were determined to leave a free heritage for their children." In addition she believed, "A disturbance at Oregon City for which a free negro was to blame, offered a good chance of ridding Oregon of the negro for all time."[12]

Peter Burnett, the committeeman who introduced the Negro exclusion act of 1844, reflected similar sentiment concerning a free heritage. Coming from the East, he wanted to help build a new and better country west of the Rocky Mountains. He felt that a new land could learn from the mistakes made in the East and avoid ". . . the evils of intoxication and mixed races."[13]

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[11]Charles H. Carey, A General History of Oregon: Prior to 1861. Two volumes (Portland, Oregon: Metropolitan Press, Publishers, 1935). Vol. I, p. 342.

[12]Bradley, "Political Beginnings in Oregon," p. 58.

[13]Peter H. Burnett, Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1880), pp. 221-222.

W. Sherman Savage differs in his opinions. He claims that the Negro exclusion bill was initiated by one man, Dr. Elijah White, a Sub-agent of Indian affairs for the national government. Savage states that Saul, who had an Indian wife, troubled the whites by threatening to stir up the Indians. Saul was arrested and turned over to Dr. White who in turn advised Saul to leave the territory by going to the mission north of the Columbia River. The Negro complied. Later White wrote to Robert Moore, Justice of the Peace, and said, referring to Saul:

> Though unsuccessful in getting employment as I had hoped, he remains in that vicinity with his Indian wife and family, conducting himself as yet in a quiet manner, but doubtless ought to be transported, together with every negro being in our condition dangerous subjects. Until we have some further means of protection, their immigration ought to be prohibited. Can this be done?[14]

Savage reasons that the answer obviously was yes, and in a few months, June, 1844, the anti-Negro law was passed.

Robert Johannsen points out that Oregon's attitude toward the Negro, both slave and free, was not unique. The expansion of slavery per se did not frighten the whites nearly as much as the thought of free Negroes living in a white society. "Almost every northern state had by 1860 passed discriminatory laws against the free Negroes. Ohio,

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[14]W. Sherman Savage, "The Negro and the Pacific Northwest," Journal of Negro History, XIII (July, 1928), p. 258. Copies of the letters and documents pertaining to this event are in W. H. Gray, History of Oregon, 1792-1849 (Portland, Oregon: Harris and Holman, 1870), pp. 395-397.

Indiana, and Illinois barred the entry of Negroes into the state, forbade them to vote, refused to permit them to serve on juries, and denied their children access to white public schools."[15]

It was inevitable that the customs in places from which Oregon's settlers originated influenced their attitudes toward Negroes. Jesse Douglas calculates that in 1850, 87 per cent of all whites in Oregon came from ten states: Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania did not contribute a full quota in relation to their population as compared with Missouri, which with only 3 per cent of the white population of the nation, contributed 25 per cent of the persons in Oregon; many of these, however, were children. Missouri contributed 2,291 persons of whom 522 were adults and 1,739 were children. New York contributed 635 persons of whom 556 were adults and 69 were children. There is little difference in the total number of people originating in the South and the North except that the South furnished a higher number in proportion to her population, and a higher proportion of children.[16]

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[15]Robert W. Johannsen, Frontier Politics and the Sectional Conflict (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1950), p. 24. Quotation from Harvey Wish, Society and Thought in America (New York, 1950), p. 425.

[16]Jesse S. Douglas, "Origins of the Population of Oregon in 1850," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XLI (April, 1950), 107.

Generally speaking, Oregon settlers came West by stages. The immigrants moved in a fan-shaped pattern from the Atlantic states and the South toward the Midwest. Many made that first stage as children or young adults. In Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri, family relationships were established prior to the move to the Oregon Country. In those midwestern states the attitudes and beliefs of the parents were tempered by frontier conditions. "There was the crucible in which the population of the Pacific Northwest was molded."[17] According to Hill, from this crucible they brought their ". . . customs, taboos and racial attitudes and racial and religious convictions . . . along with the other baggage and impedimenta of the pioneers."[18] These principles and values as well as their prejudices and biases formed the basis for racial attitudes that extended into the middle of the twentieth century. The Negro exclusion act of 1844, although amended within the year and repealed the following year, reflected the tenor of the times, not only in Oregon, but in much of the United States.

The Negro exclusion act deterred at least one non-white from settling in Oregon. John Minto tells of his talks with a George Washington Bush who journeyed West over the Oregon Trail with him in 1844.

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," pp. 26-27.

Bush, who was a mulatto, and his white wife who were financially well-off had assisted some white members of the train in financing their move. "He told me he should watch when we got to Oregon, what usage was awarded men of color, and if he could not have a free man's rights, he would seek the protection of the Mexican government in California or New Mexico."[19] When Bush arrived in the West, he wintered near The Dalles, outside the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government. He wanted to settle in the Willamette Valley, but with the strong stand taken by the Oregonians against free Negroes and mulattoes, he decided to settle north of the Columbia River under British protection.[20] The Columbia River was generally accepted as the northern boundary of Oregon.[21] He prospered in the Puget Sound Country and was one of the richest men in the area up to the year 1859. Colonel M. T. Simmons and other white men who came West with Bush, accompanied him north of the Columbia and also settled in the vicinity. Colonel Simmons, a Kentuckian with a strong personality, entered politics. In 1852 he was

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[19]John Minto, "Reminiscence of Experiences on the Oregon Trail in 1844," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, II (September, 1901), 212.

[20]Fred Lockley, "Some Documentary Records of Slavery in Oregon," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XVII (June, 1916), 112.

[21]Bradley, "Political Beginnings in Oregon," p. 57.

instrumental in the passage of a bill in the Oregon Territorial legislature allowing Bush, a mulatto, to live in the Territory. The Statesman on December 18, 1852, published a petition to the legislature with 113 names subscribed for this special enactment.[22] The legislature also passed a resolution confirming Bush's land claim, and in 1855 Congress passed a special act securing for Bush 640 acres.[23]

Other Negroes, however, were excluded. Winslow, alias Winslow Anderson, for example, was tried in 1851 before Judge Thomas Nelson of the Oregon Supreme Court and ordered out of the territory.[24] He obeyed the mandate although his long residence in the area should have exempted him from such a law. In general the Negro was subject to capricious enforcement of the exclusion act; some were allowed to stay, while others were forced to leave. Some Negroes lived in Oregon during the 1840's and 50's. The United States Census for 1850 identified 207 persons as being Negro or mulatto. Questioning this number, Douglas examined the census data and found that Indians and Kanakas

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[22]Walter C. Woodward, "The Rise and Early History of Political Parties in Oregon," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XII (March, 1911), 125. Woodward omits the name Bush but undoubtedly this is George Washington Bush.

[23]Charles H. Carey, A General History of Oregon (Portland, Oregon: Metropolitan Press, 1936), p. 489.

[24]"Negro Pioneers: Their Page in Oregon History," Oregon Native Son, I (January, 1900), 433.

were counted as Negroes. He has corrected for this error and computed a more accurate figure of fifty-four, which is now generally accepted.[25] In view of the strong and well known prejudice against the blacks during the 1840's, the lesser figure of fifty-four is easier to accept. Even so, a question arises as to whether these Negroes were in Oregon of their own free will or because they were slaves.

The existence of slavery in Oregon is denied by some writers. T. W. Davenport states, ". . . there was not a negro slave within its far reaching borders or within a thousand miles thereof."[26] He cites as support for his statement a letter he received from Judge R. P. Boise of the Oregon Supreme Court which reads as follows:

> . . . Colonel Nat Ford came to Oregon from Missouri in 1845 [sic] and brought with him three slaves; two men and one woman. The woman was married to one of these men and had some small children. Ford claimed these children as slaves and continued to claim them until 1853 . . . . Prior to 1853 the parents of these children (Robin and Polly) had claimed their freedom and left Ford, and in 1852 were living in Nesmith's Mills, but Ford had kept the children. In 1853, Robin, the father of the children, brought a suit by habeas corpus to get possession of the children. This case was heard by Judge Williams in the summer of 1853, and he held that these children, being then (by a voluntary act of Ford) in Oregon, where slavery could not legally exist, were free

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[25]The error was due to Joseph L. Meek, U. S. Marshal of the Territory, who included 38 Hawaiians and 114 Indians or half-breeds as Negroes. Douglas, "Origins of the Population of Oregon in 1850," p. 95.

[26]T. W. Davenport, "The Slavery Question in Oregon," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, IX (September, 1908), 196.

> from bonds of slavery and awarded their custody to their father.[27]

This case had been in litigation prior to Judge George H. Williams' appointment to the Supreme Court of the Territory, but his predecessors declined to hear it. The slavery question had become an impassioned political issue in the nation and was bound to influence the local political scene. Nevertheless the case was among the first Williams heard. He based his decision on the premise ". . . that without some positive legislative enactment establishing slavery here, it did not and could not exist in Oregon, and I awarded to the colored people their freedom."[28] This letter and court case establish the existence of at least one instance of slavery in the area.

Fred Lockley reports having ". . . met a number of interesting ex-slaves in Oregon." Lou Southworth described to Lockley his childhood days as a slave and his trip to Oregon. When Lockley asked Amanda Johnson if she had ever been sold as a slave, she replied:

> No sir, I was never sold nor bartered for. I was given as a wedding present to my owner's daughter. I belonged to Mrs. Nancy Wildhite . . . . When her daughter, Miss Lydia, was married, she gave me to her as a wedding present . . . . I have five brothers and six sisters; none of us were sold like common negroes. We were all given away as the different young folks

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[27]Ibid., p. 196. Lockley corrects the date of Ford's arrival to 1844. Lockley, "Some Documentary Records of Slavery in Oregon," p. 108.

[28]George H. Williams, "Political History of Oregon, 1853-65," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, II (March, 1901), 6.

> got married. In 1853 my owners came to Oregon. A man offered my master $1200 for me. I was 19 years old then. My owner said, 'Amanda isn't for sale. She is going across the plains to the Willamette Valley with us. She is like one of the family. I don't care to sell her.' . . . Lou Southworth, also a slave, crossed the plains the same year I did. So did Benjamin Johnson, another slave, who later became my husband.[29]

Hill found reference to the existence of slavery in the local newspapers. William Allen of Yamhill County, states in The Oregonian of December 26, 1857, "There are some slaves here--but no law to protect this kind of property." J. W. Mack said in The Statesman of December 22, 1857, "My neighbor in Lane County owns slaves and is now in California endeavoring to test the validity of the fugitive slave law."[30]

There is evidence of at least one transfer of ownership of slaves in Lane County. A bill of sale dated in the late fifties proves that a Mr. Southworth sold the ". . . negro boy Cole and his grandmother" to Colonel Joseph Teal. Judge Stratton drew up the necessary papers for the transfer of ownership. Colonel Teal released the boy and his grandmother a "little time thereafter," and they settled near the present site of Junction City.[31]

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[29]Fred Lockley, "Facts Pertaining to Ex-slaves in Oregon and Documentary Record of the Case of Robin Holmes vs. Nathanial Ford, Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXIII (March, 1922), 111.

[30]Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," p. 16.

[31]"Slavery in the Pacific Northwest," Oregon Native Son, II (November, 1900), 314. This event is not corroborated by any other account of slavery in Oregon.

An unknown number of Negroes came to Oregon as slaves. Since they were ignorant of the law, they remained subject to their masters. Because most of the Negroes in Oregon were employed as domestics or farm hands, their condition of involuntary servitude was not flagrantly displayed. Lockley has uncovered in the court records some significant entries pertaining to slavery. Although these documents do not prove that slavery existed in Oregon, they show that the registration of a document of manumission in Oregon was considered prudent. A document recorded in Washington County states:

> Know all men by these presents, that for and in consideration of five hundred dollars, to me in hand paid by Jane Thomas, late Jane Snowdon, a free woman of color . . . I David Snowdon of the County of Ray, in the State of Missouri, have bargained, sold and delivered her . . . one certain negro boy slave named Billy, age about eleven years and the son of the said Jane Thomas . . . as she is about to emigrate to Oregon and wishes to take the boy with her. A.D. 1852. David Snowdon (seal). Received for record April 10th and recorded this thirteenth day of April A.D. 1854. W. S. Caldwell, Auditor and Recorder, Washington County, Oregon Territory.[32]

In the court records of Clark County, now part of the state of Washington, is the document of manumission releasing a slave in the Territory of Oregon. How long this slave and master resided in Oregon is not known. In the document a Captain Llewellyn Jones, U. S. Army is quoted:

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[32]Lockley, "Some Documentary Records of Slavery in Oregon," p. 107.

> Mommia Travers, a black woman, age about forty-five, bought by me from Isaac Burbayge, in April 1849, I have this day given her freedom unconditionally, and she is in all respects free to go and do as may seem to her most to her advantage, without let or hinderance from me, my agents, heirs, or assigns. Witness my hand and seal at Vancouver, May 5th, 1851. Llewellyn Jones, Captain, U.S.A.[33]

Jones must have felt that the above legal phraseology was insufficient, for he added the following: "The above named woman, Mommia, is an honest and perfectly conscientious woman and deserves kind and good treatment at the hands of everyone." This document was recorded July 28, 1857.

Included in the law when Oregon became a Territory in 1848, were sections prohibiting slavery and excluding free Negroes and mulattoes from living in the Territory. In 1851 when the constitutionality of the exclusion act was tested, the Supreme Court ruled in the affirmative. The local newspapers heralded this as "the re-affirmation of a well-settled doctrine."[34] Despite the court decision, when Oregon applied for statehood, slavery was a critical issue. The Constitutional Convention of 1857 avoided the free Negro and slavery question and referred it to the people at the same time the constitution was submitted for their approval.

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[33]Ibid., p. 108.

[34]Robert W. Johannsen, Frontier Politics and the Sectional Conflict, p. 21.

In Oregon, as in the rest of the nation, the slavery and free Negro question was among the most perplexing and controversial issues of the day. During the summer and fall of 1857, the Oregonians debated the pros and cons of slavery. Their discussions, for the most part, were emotionally expressed. One unemotional and amoral argument greatly influenced the outcome of the 1857 vote. Judge George H. Williams delivered a most outstanding argument against slavery in Oregon in a statement in the Oregon Statesman. In his rather lengthy argument, Williams avoided emotionalism and did not condemn slavery in other states. Instead he presented a practical case against slavery in Oregon based upon economics. Williams emphasized six principal reasons for opposition:

1. Oregon was not suited climatically to benefit from slave labor.
2. Labor performed by a white man in Oregon was cheaper.
3. Transporting slaves to Oregon was hazardous and expensive.
4. Runaway slaves were likely to join the Indians and increase that danger.
5. The presence of slave labor degrades all white labor.
6. Because the sentiment in the state was not overwhelmingly

in favor of slavery, for the sake of unity, slavery should be prohibited.[35]

Davenport claims, "I am confident that it was the most timely and the most effective appeal published during the whole controversy . . . . After the circulation of this address, any observing person could notice that a change was taking place, any sensitive person could feel it."[36] Williams' statement may have offended many members of his party and put an end to any chance of fulfilling his senatorial ambitions, but it was effective at the polls.

In November the electorate cast their ballots and accepted the constitution 7,195 to 3,195, a majority of 4,000. Slavery was rejected by a majority of 5,082 and at the same time free Negroes and mulattoes were excluded from the Territory by an overwhelming majority of 8,640 to 1,081. Clearly the Oregonians did not want slavery, but even more emphatically, as they had demonstrated in 1844 by the Negro exclusion act, and again in 1857 by including in their constitution a section excluding Negroes and mulattoes, the people did not want Negroes living in the state.

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[35]George H. Williams, "The 'Free State Letter' of Judge G. H. Williams," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, IX (September, 1908), 254-273. Reprinted from the Oregon Statesman of July 28, 1857.

[36]Davenport, "The Slavery Question in Oregon," pp. 234-235.

During the Civil War the people of Oregon were divided in their sympathies. Their lack of unity limited Oregon's contribution to the war effort. When Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves in the rebellious states, many Oregonians did not approve of the measure. The Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which allowed Negroes to move freely about the country, negated Oregon's Negro exclusion act. Oregonians' attitude toward Negroes, however, is reflected in the fact that the Negro exclusion act was not removed from the state constitution until 1926.

Despite the opposition to Negroes in the state, the United States Census records reveal that in 1860 there were 128 Negroes and mulattoes living in Oregon and 346 in 1870.[37] The number grew slowly; the United States Census records show that in 1880 there were 487 Negroes, by 1890, 1,186, and in 1900 the number dropped to 1,105.

Negroes had been scattered throughout the rural areas of Oregon, but after the war they began to move into the urban centers, especially Portland. Their migration was slow at first, but the tempo increased between 1870 and 1890. In the city Negroes met prejudice and discrimination, but they felt more secure surrounded by other Negroes

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[37]Using the erroneous 207 figure from the 1850 census, many writers noted a decline in Negro population rather than an increase from the 54 Negroes in 1850.

and found that they could avoid much unpleasantness if they remained in their "place." In Oregon blacks were exploited, but no more than elsewhere in the nation.[38] Their move to Portland was in a large measure economic; Portland was a busy seaport and rail center and the opportunity for unskilled labor was great. Moreover, the Chinese were the scape-goats for the white workers just before the turn of the century, removing the focus of attention from the Negroes. After the migration of rural Negroes to the urban area, Thomas Hogg claims that the history of the Negro in Oregon virtually becomes the history of the Negro in Portland.[39]

Interviewing Negro men who lived in Portland at the turn of the century, Hill found that Negroes were represented in a fairly wide range of work.[40] Most of them were engaged in service jobs as waiters, stewards, and porters. Some, however, were skilled workers and performed tasks such as tailoring, horseshoeing, and shoemaking. Skilled

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[38]Thomas C. Hogg, "Negroes and Their Institutions in Oregon," Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture, XXX (Fall, 1969), 276.

[39]Ibid., p. 278.

[40]He lists waiters, cooks, stewards, porters, brakeman's helper, street cleaner, street repair man, janitor, barber (for whites), hack driver, piano player, shoemaker, tailor, horseshoer, carpenter, ship "corker." and timber mill workers. Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," pp. 30-33.

work of the latter type as well as carpentry and ship caulking placed Negroes in direct competition with white men.

Labor was scarce. Since the city was prosperous and expanding and jobs were plentiful, the competition was more theoretical than actual. When work became more difficult to obtain, white men took over the jobs in the skilled trades and Negroes performed the more menial tasks. The Negro's economic threat to the white man diminished because few young Negroes were given an opportunity to learn the skilled trades. Most Negroes continued to be confined to work that was considered beneath the white man's dignity.

White people objected to Negroes living in most sections of the city. Until 1890 they were generally restricted to an area of thirty-five square blocks on the west side of the Willamette River. From the river, the boundary ran west along Glisan Street to Broadway, then south on Broadway to Burnside Street and east to the river. This area coincided with the established red-light district in Portland. Negro "sporting men" imported women to the city for prostitution. The "open life" that was characteristic of the frontier towns flourished in Portland. Loggers, miners, and country boys came into the city to see the sights and the "sporting women." After the other bars in the city closed for the night, the Golden West Hotel on Broadway and Everett remained open for gambling and drinking. The employees of such establishments

were, for the most part, Negroes, but the owners were white.[41] When the Portland Hotel was completed in 1890, seventy-five Negroes were brought from North Carolina and Georgia to work in Portland's new showplace. With their families, these newcomers added a substantial number to the respectable Negro community and counter-balanced the Negroes who made up the underworld element. Hill implies that a significant number of Negroes derived their livelihoods either directly or from the periphery of the illicit activities in Portland.[42]

White people, however, did not differentiate between the respectable working Negroes and those who were a part of Portland's underworld. In the early days, the majority of the blacks were crowded into one area where prostitution, gambling, and all-night clubs operated.[43] Those activities that could not operate legally were often tolerated but "fined" at regular intervals. The rationale was that some illegal practices were too difficult to control, therefore it was expedient that these activities be restricted to a limited area where

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[41] Ibid., pp. 34-35.

[42] Ibid., p. 31.

[43] Allan H. Spears, Black Chicago: The Making of a Ghetto 1890-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 24-25. Spears amply illustrates the lack of sensitivity on the part of the whites concerning class structure in the black community as he describes early Chicago.

they could be more closely watched. City officials then needed a contact or go-between in the black community. Such a need developed a position for a Negro political boss. One prominent figure, Julius Sevier, occupied the station of political power in the black community for about sixteen years. When a Negro became involved with the law or was in jail, Sevier was the man his friends or family contacted to arrange release. Reputedly, Sevier was so influential that he even had people who were accused of murder released from jail.[44]

The black ghetto on the west side of the river began to break up during the early 1890's. Businessmen who needed additional space in which to expand their commercial and industrial enterprises found the area occupied by the blacks well suited to meet their needs. Moving the Negro "Enterprise Lodge of Masons" to a newly constructed meeting hall at Larrabee and Clackamas initiated the general migration. The moving of the lodge influenced the congregations of some of the Negro churches to move to the Albina area. Later, after considerable growth, this nucleus was to expand and protrude into the Jefferson attendance area. As the economic pressure of expansion continued, the old wooden shacks gave way to new brick buildings and the small Negro businesses also moved to the Williams Avenue vicinity. Change was

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[44]Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," p. 38.

gradual; the migration continued throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century. Finally, in 1930, the Golden West Hotel, a landmark in the old Negro section, closed its doors, and the management re-opened in the Medley Hotel on Interstate and Mississippi in Albina. "Girls" working in the hotel moved into rooming houses and apartments in the immediate vicinity.[45] The people in the Negro community were again forced to raise their families in the midst of prostitution, drinking, and gambling.

The Negro population in Portland continued to grow slowly. Daniel Hill, writing in 1933, believes that several factors influenced the slow growth: strong anti-Negro tradition in the state that discouraged immigration, the lack of employment for Negroes, a greater death rate than birth rate during the early depression years, and the general unstable nature of the Negro population throughout the United States up to 1900.[46] During the 1930's, however, the population took a definite upturn and a sizable increase was recorded in Portland for that decade. The increase was a result of natural births and of a limited emigration from the city during the years of the Great Depression.

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[45] Ibid., p. 43.

[46] Ibid., p. 44.

E. Simpson Hill, Director of the Portland Urban League, declares that Negroes were not encouraged to come to Portland as permanent residents. He came to Portland to work during the summers in the late 1930's and relates that the Negroes with whom he worked did not consider Portland a hospitable city for an unemployed Negro. They believed that a "gentleman's agreement" was in effect among employers limiting the areas of employment for Negroes to certain types of jobs. The railroad for which he and a number of other Negroes worked during the summer issued a pass providing free transportation back to their homes at the end of the work period. Many interpreted the pass system as an indication that out-of-town Negroes were not wanted in Portland after the seasonal work was over.[47]

In 1931 the Negro Bureau of Economics conducted a survey to determine the kinds of employment and the number of Negroes then employed in Portland.[48] The results show that the majority of Negroes were employed as porters, waiters, or domestics. Areas of employment were more restricted in 1931 than at the turn of the century, for Negroes had actually lost out entirely in some types of work.[49] The skilled

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[47]Interview with E. Simpson Hill, Executive Director, Portland Urban League, October 15, 1969.

[48]See Appendix I.

[49]See my note 40, page 58.

trades as well as hack driving and barbering had become white men's jobs and white women took over some of the hotel and restaurant work. In 1930, for instance, the Portland Hotel replaced thirty Negro waiters with white waitresses.[50]

Because of the limited opportunities for a Negro to rise above the lowest level in the job market, many sought to advance through self-employment. A Negro Bureau of Economics survey in 1931 found eighty-four Negro business enterprises. Most of these were small, service-oriented; many were operated from the private homes of the proprietors.[51] The majority depended solely upon the Negro community for customers, but endeavors such as shoeshine parlors and dress-making also catered to the white trade. The Oregon Mutual Aid Association and the Building Association are early examples of a joint effort on the part of the Negroes to establish a substantial Negro business community.

Although it appears that in Portland the Negro's opportunity to up-grade his work was limited, he was able to break out of the ghetto-like communities that entrapped the blacks of the larger eastern cities. When the Negro section on the west bank of the river dissolved, not all

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[50]Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," p. 56.

[51]See Appendix II.

of the Negroes moved into the Williams Avenue area. Many moved to sparsely settled sections of the city and bought or rented property. Because the transition took place over a number of years, and the total number of Negroes was small, not much resistance occurred. As the city expanded, the whites moved in and around the Negro homes that were already established in a given area. By 1940 the United States Census figures show that Negroes lived in 58 of the 61 census tracts in Portland.

The integration of the various areas of Portland was not entirely without incident. In the early 1930's, Dr. De Norval Unthank, a physician, purchased a home in Westmoreland, a middle-class neighborhood. He was unaware that any strong hostility existed until after he completed the purchase. His house was attacked by vandals, windows were broken and he received threats by telephone and mail. Because of such harassment, he was forced to vacate his home and find another area in Portland in which to live.[52]

Racial discrimination was always practiced in Portland to some extent.[53] The degree of intensity varied in proportion to the

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[52]Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," p. 112.

[53]Surprisingly, however, when the Ku Klux Klan was very active in Oregon during the 1920's, the Negro was not the target for its animosity. Instead, the Ku Klux Klan directed its hate campaign towards the growing number of Roman Catholics and other "foreign

degree whites felt threatened, either socially or economically, by the blacks. Since a wide variety of opportunities for discrimination existed in the city, the Negro had to learn which activities or areas to avoid. Lack of consistency on the part of the whites made the Negro's role extremely frustrating. Generally speaking, the Negro encountered his greatest degree of discrimination in commercial establishments. Signs, "We Serve White People Only," were frequently seen in the windows of restaurants in the working-class sections of the city.[54] The better restaurants did not serve Negroes but used more subtle methods to discourage their patronage. White hotels did not accept Negro guests.[55] Most of the theaters offered equal privileges to black and white customers, but an exception was the Broadway Theater which seated Negroes on the main floor during matinees, but at night required

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elements." James D. Diegler, "Epilogue to Progressivism: Oregon, 1920-1924" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1958), p. 3; Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 200; Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," p. 40.

[54]Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," p. 112.

[55]Earl McInnes, manager of the Multnomah Hotel and president of the Oregon Hotel Association, testified before the state senate judiciary committee that "mixing of whites and Negroes as guests in a hotel had proven destructive to business." The Oregonian, February 16, 1939, p. 4.

all blacks to sit in the balcony.[56] At large public affairs where there was no personal contact, such as outdoor concerts and picnics in the park, Negroes knew that they usually could safely attend without being segregated or denied admission. Officially the municipal recreation facilities were open to members of all races, and the parks, playgrounds, tennis courts, and golf links were frequently used by Negroes.[57] Whites, however, practiced discrimination even in these areas on an individual basis. Most of the sporting events tolerated mixed races. Prior to 1871 Negro children attended segregated schools, but in that year separate schools were discontinued and all children attended their neighborhood school.

In his survey conducted in the early 1930's, Hill investigated the attitudes of Portland's Negroes concerning the education of their children. He was interested in the answers to such questions as: Does education have value for a Negro child? What type of education should Negroes seek for their children? How much? He found after interviewing 105 Negroes, that their responses could be divided into three categories correlating closely with their age groups. Hill, therefore, labels them "Older Negro," "Middle Age Group," and "Younger

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[56]Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," p. 96.

[57]Ibid., p. 95.

Negro." As might be expected, the "Older Negro" group did not place a high value on education, believing that "common sense and 'mother wit' are all the things a man needs in this world . . . ." They viewed the jobs a Negro could obtain as so menial that it was a waste of time and effort to get an education. The philosophy of many of the older Negroes who were active in the "Pentacostal" and "Holy Roller" type religious sects is revealed in one of their popular spirituals:

> "This world is not-a-my home
> This world's a howlin' wilderness
> This world is not-a-my home."[58]

There were exceptions to the above attitudes in the "Older Negro" group. Some, like many of the white immigrants, labored additional long hours to attain the best education possible for their children. They regarded the school as a panacea; the principal means for both social and economic mobility.

In the "Middle Age Group," Hill found only a few who were interested in formal education for their children. Included in the "Middle Age Group" were affluent members of the underworld or those living on its margin, who did not want their children exposed to the seamy elements. Sending their children East to school solved their problem, and as a consequence, they were not interested in Portland's

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[58] Ibid., p. 121.

educational facilities. A large section of this group believed that a "gift-of-gab" and the possession of a few social graces were all the attributes needed for success. These were the hustlers, the fellows out to make a fast and easy dollar. The other section of the group was made up of those who believed that one's natural talents were instrumental in success or failure in life. According to their beliefs, these natural talents were God-given gifts, and to go to school to improve on something that God gave was a foolish notion. This group included singers and musicians, but also good cooks who believed that their work was an art. Each could find successful models to use as proof for the validity of their philosophy.

Within the "Young Negro" group, Hill found two interesting ideas concerning education. One contingent believed that the color of one's skin determined the degree of formal education one should receive. The light-skinned Negro or mulatto, they believed, did not need much more than an ordinary education because "God had favored him with a light complexion and that insured him success in life." On the other hand, they felt that those children with dark skins needed an exceptional education in order to overcome the handicap of color not only within the white community, but also in the Negro community. One mother remarked that her dark child needed the best education possible because "this will be her only chance to get by in America."

The rest of the "Young Negro" group agreed that an education was necessary, but some of them preferred the academically-oriented education promoted by W. E. B. Du Bois and others preferred the vocational-oriented education stressing agriculture and mechanical pursuits, advocated by Booker T. Washington.[59]

Regardless of their educational philosophies, Negro parents abided by the compulsory education laws in Oregon to the same extent as did the white parents. The United States Census for 1930 reveals that 75.6 per cent of the eligible white children were enrolled in school as compared with 74.4 per cent of the eligible Negro children.

At the outbreak of World War II, the Negroes in Portland had their niche, albeit a lowly one, in the larger community. Most of them performed tasks of a menial nature for their livelihood, and socially they were relegated to the bottom of the hierarchy. Portland's Negro community was isolated geographically from the major concentrations of Negroes in America. Although Portland Negroes supported a newspaper, The Advocate, they were provincially-oriented. The small Negro population reduced the opportunities for tensions and confrontations, thus on the surface harmonious race relations appeared to exist in the

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[59]For this section on education I am indebted to Hill's Chapter VII "Philosophy of Life: Attitude Toward Education," in "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," pp. 117-124.

city. In actuality, however, by tradition and custom, the boundaries of the Negroes' "place" in Portland were clearly defined. The fields of employment open to Negroes, the areas in which they could purchase or rent property, and the degree to which they could mingle with the whites was known and observed by most blacks and whites. Covert discrimination was widely practiced, but whenever the whites felt threatened by the blacks and believed that they were not staying in their "place," they resorted to more open forms of discrimination.

Within this social structure the blacks developed their own sub-society. Although few in number, many appeared to prosper financially and materially. They observed the compulsory school law of Oregon by sending their children to integrated schools. Attendance at school beyond the elementary level by blacks was not common, but neither was it common for white children in the lower socio-economic level. Dr. Walter C. Reynolds, who was graduated from Jefferson High School just prior to World War II, comments that there were only four Negroes in the school at that time.[60]

World War II and the great demand for war material of all description challenged Portland's hidden attitudes concerning race

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[60]Minutes of the meeting, Race and Education, Subcommittee on Government Agencies, p. 32. School District No. 1 Curriculum Library, Portland, Oregon.

relations. Gunnar Myrdal, the noted Swedish social economist, asserts that the American Negro again, as in World War I, was provided an opportunity to improve his lot.[61] The depression stalled the Negroes' economic advance which started with the Great Migration of 1915, but the war industries' demand for labor again provided the impetus to encourage the blacks to migrate from the rural South to cities of the North and West. Portland, Oregon, for the first time, was to receive a significant number of black workers.

Throughout the history of Oregon, whites did not want Negroes in the state. Oregon's legislature passed discriminatory laws forbidding the blacks from settling in the state and also prohibiting marriage between a black and a white person. The whites' complete lack of feeling or respect for Negroes is revealed by the delay in the repeal of these laws. The first had been negated by the 14th amendment to the United States Constitution, but remained in Oregon's constitution until 1926.[62] Miscegenation was illegal in

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[61]Gunnar Myrdal, et al., An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1944), p. 408.

[62]State of Oregon, Blue Book and Official Directory, 1927-28 (Salem, Oregon: State Printing Department, 1927), p. 27.

Oregon until 1959.[63] Those blacks coming to Oregon during World War II were not made to feel welcome.

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[63]Oregon Revised Statutes 106.210, Ch. 531 (1959).

CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUX AND HOUSING PATTERNS OF THE NEGRO POPULATION

With the advent of World War II, many new jobs became available in the urban centers. White workers quit the less desirable jobs and employers had difficulty finding replacements. Such work opportunities accelerated the Negro migration from the South to the North and West.

Portland received its first large influx of blacks as a result of available work in the shipyards. When the number of blacks in the city increased, overt discriminatory practices became common. Racial discrimination in housing practiced during the war continued for the next two decades. Such restrictive housing patterns created de facto segregation of Portland's schools in a fashion similar to that of other northern cities.

World War II did not originate the blacks' northern migration. Availability of work during World War I initiated the Great Migration of Negroes in 1915 that continued through the prosperous twenties and even during the depression years of the 1930's.[1] More generous public

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[1]Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, p. 197.

assistance programs in the cities, especially cities in the North, rather than the availability of employment accounts for the continuation of the migration during later years.

It was not until World War II that Oregon's Negro population increased to any extent by immigration.[2] American settlers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries moved from east to west, but the Negroes moved from south to north. Like the early pioneers, these twentieth century migrants, for the most part, also moved only a state or two away from their original homes. As in the past, however, those with a more adventuresome nature made longer moves. An example of this latter group is the small number of Negroes who moved to the Pacific Coast during the 1920's and 1930's and chose California and Washington in preference to Oregon. (See Table 1.)

Whites and Negroes alike migrated to the West Coast at the outbreak of the war. Thousands of men were needed to work in the aircraft factories, shipyards, and other defense industries and to load ships with material for the war zone. If Seattle's World War II effort can be concisely summed up as "aircraft construction," and that of San Francisco as "a port of embarkation," then Portland's contribution

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[2]Arnold Rose, The Negro in America (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1944), p. 63; see Appendix V.

TABLE 1

PACIFIC STATES NEGRO POPULATION

Year	California	Oregon	Washington
1910[a]	21,645	1,492	6,058
1920[a]	38,763	2,144	6,883
1930[a]	81,048	2,234	6,840
1940[b]	124,306	2,565	7,424
1950[b]	462,172	11,592	30,691
1960[b]	883,861	18,133	48,738

[a]U. S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1940. Sixty-first Number (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1940), p. 15.

[b]U. S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1962. Eighty-third edition (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 30.

can be entitled "shipbuilding." Building boats on the banks of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers was an old trade.

Although World War I had caused much activity in Portland's shipyards, few Negroes were employed. It was World War II and the proximity of the Pacific theater of war which created the expansion and provided jobs for Negroes. The existing shipyards added men and equipment but were still unable to meet the growing demands of America's war effort. Henry J. Kaiser, theretofore a stranger in shipbuilding, began to build ships with the financial assistance of the United States government. Combining new construction techniques and a tried and able staff of engineers and administrators, his yards were soon turning out cargo vessels, troop transports, aircraft carriers, and landing craft of various types. Kaiser utilized experience gained on giant hydro-electric projects and adapted assembling of prefabricated components to ship construction. Making use of the assembly-line method, his yards soon sent a record number of ships sliding down the ways. The new construction methods also permitted a greater efficiency in the employment of available manpower. Unskilled workers, both Negro and white, were trained to perform routine tasks of limited scope and more skilled workers were reserved for those jobs requiring greater competence. The assembly-line technique provided

the blacks an opportunity to perform semi-skilled work rather than the usual common labor.

Even prior to America's entry into the war, skilled and semi-skilled workers were employed in the Portland-Vancouver area. Subsequently, when the United States government began placing additional contracts with the Portland-area shipyards, a critical labor shortage developed. Although the War Manpower Commission allowed the United States Employment Service (USES) to recruit workers for the shipyards, recruiting was restricted to New York and the less-industrialized sections of the Midwest and the South because these were the areas with a surplus of labor.

Representatives from the larger shipyards accompanied the USES personnel to interview prospective employees. If a man accepted a job, he was told the type of work he would do, the shift he would work, and where he would live upon arrival in Portland.[3] Black or white, skilled or unskilled, anyone who was physically able and desired to work was hired.

Race soon became a problem. When blacks attempted to receive union clearance to perform skilled work, they were usually denied. In the summer of 1942, when the labor problem became acute,

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[3]Interview with M. A. Vollbrecht, associated with Kaiser Shipbuilding Corporation Personnel Department, July, 1969.

executives of the Kaiser Company, meeting with representatives of the Boilermakers' Union and the War Manpower Commission, justified to them its need for more workers. An ensuing agreement permitted the Kaiser Company to recruit, clear, and offer transportation to all prospective employees regardless of color.

Late in September of 1942 the first large group of workers was assembled in New York to begin the trip to Portland. With the group were the first of several thousand blacks who were imported to work in the shipyards. An issue of The Oregonian, Portland's principal daily newspaper, featured the story of Kaiser's "magic carpet" on page one.[4] Five hundred New Yorkers were on their way West, the article stated, to contribute to the war effort. Included in the account were comments and remarks by the working men, all whites, concerning their desire to take part in the defense industry. A short statement, "In the train are 30 Negroes," had an electrifying effect on some union personnel in Portland. Even before the men arrived, the local Boilermakers' Union had altered its agreement with the Kaiser Company by refusing to admit Negroes into the union. When the contingent reached St. Paul, Minnesota, company representatives informed the workers that whites

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[4]Oregonian, September 30, 1942, p. 1.

would be given the grade of work for which they were hired, but the Negroes would have to accept laborers' classifications.[5]

Some of the blacks protested and refused to continue the journey, whereas those who went on to Portland voiced their protest when they arrived. "We can do common labor in New York," a spokesman declared, ". . . we were promised the opportunity to get something better."[6] The company attempted to clear the Negroes for work, but again the union resisted. Tom Ray, business manager for the local Boilermakers' Union, did not alleviate the situation when he announced to the press that he would ". . . never permit women to serve as helpers to Negroes," or to ". . . allow colored men to work in the holds of ships with women."[7]

Finally in November, at meetings in New York and Washington, the problem of union clearance was settled without mention of Negroes. The War Manpower Commission, Kaiser shipyard management, and union officials agreed that the President's executive order of June 25,

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[5]Carol Coan, "Revised Study of Portland-Vancouver Area" (unpublished report concerning Negro employment in files of Portland Urban League, December 21, 1944), p. 6.

[6]Oregonian, October 9, 1942, p. 12.

[7]Oregonian, October 21, 1942, p. 1.

1941, requiring equality of employment in defense plants, ". . . would be observed by both management and labor in the shipyards."[8]

Despite the agreement, Portland's union officials did not admit blacks into their branch organization nor did they allow them to operate on work permits. Instead, they set up an auxiliary union for black members, across the river in Vancouver. The auxiliary union offered the Negro members two opportunities: the privilege of working, and the obligation to pay dues; but almost all other union benefits were denied the blacks.[9]

Notwithstanding the restrictions placed upon Negroes working in the shipyards, this particular defense industry was by far the largest employer of Negroes in the area. A look at Table 2 shows that the Negroes were not, to any extent, integrated into the industries of Portland. Those blacks who did work in the shipyards served, for the most part, as common laborers. When the auxiliary union formed in Vancouver, a black spokesman in Portland claimed that "About twenty-five journeyman welders, chippers and boilermakers" were affected by the change since they were eligible to join the union.[10]

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[8]Oregonian, November 13, 1942, p. 1.

[9]City Club of Portland, "The Negro in Portland," Portland City Club Bulletin (Portland: City Club of Portland, 1945), p. 58.

[10]Oregonian, December 12, 1942, p. 1.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF NEGROES TO TOTAL LABOR FORCE IN WAR PLANTS

	Total Employment	Non-White Employment	Percent
NON-WHITE EMPLOYMENT			
Portland Metropolitan Area			
September, 1943	140,893	2,706	1.9
July, 1944	130,367	6,204	4.8
September, 1944	132,422	7,541	5.7
November, 1944	99,445	7,088	7.1
January, 1945	112,498	6,794	6.0
March, 1945	115,738	6,950	6.0
BREAKDOWN BY INDUSTRY			
63 Reporting Establishments			
July 1, 1944			
Paper and Allied Products	3,667	5	.14
Iron and Steel and Products	1,962	133	6.78
Aircraft and Parts	1,795	7	.39
Shipbuilding and Repair	108,260	5,975	5.52
Aluminum Smelting and Refining	1,595	44	2.76
Machinery (except Electric)	1,637	1	.06
All other Manufacturing	5,352	46	.86
Transp., Commun., other Utilities	7,775	4	.05
Total	132,043	6,215	4.71
BREAKDOWN BY INDUSTRY			
March, 1945			
Lumber and Timber Basic	4,950	4	.08
Paper and Allied Products	4,494	7	.15
Iron and Steel Products	1,566	188	12.00
Aircraft and Parts	1,575	3	.19
Shipbuilding and Repair (excluding Commercial Iron)	95,573	6,676	6.98
Aluminum Smelting and Refining	1,417	16	1.12
Machinery (excluding Electric)	1,612	1	.06
All other Manufacturing	5,379	59	1.09
Transp., Commun., other Utilities	3,724	--	--
Total	120,290	6,954	5.78

Source: The City Club of Portland, "The Negro in Portland."

Contrary to prevailing belief, in the early days of the war the shipyards did not recruit and import large numbers of black workers. In October of 1942 the shipyards reported that they had recruited only thirty-nine blacks from outside the immediate area. By contrast, the Union Pacific railroad was the only sizable employer which had recently imported a significant number of black workers. A total of 238 blacks were newly hired by the railroad, 124 to replace Japanese section-gang workers and 114 blacks for the traditional work as dining-car stewards.[11] The majority of blacks who were in the Portland area during the early years of the war were young men who journeyed there of their own volition seeking work in an area where jobs were plentiful.[12]

Portlanders became worried as the number of defense industry workers increased and the normal routine of the usually quiet city changed. "Swing-shift" dances that began at 1 A.M., crowded conditions in the restaurants and bars which accommodated the growing number of "shipyard workers," the mixed sounds of Brooklyn accents and Arkansas drawls confused and frightened many people. "Shipyard worker" was defined as any recent immigrant to the Portland area

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[11] Oregonian, October 4, 1942, p. 7.

[12] Ibid.

whether he actually worked in the defense industry or not. Bigots selected as their scapegoats the recently arrived blacks and attempted to blame the atmosphere of frustration created by the "shipyard workers" on the blacks. "New Negro Migrants Worry City," announced a writer for The Oregonian. He stated that Negroes lured to the city by waiting defense jobs had overtaxed the available housing for Negroes in Albina.[13] City officials had responded to the increased number of Negroes in the area by adding an extra patrol car in order to control disturbances in the overcrowded community. In Albina, attics had been converted to sleeping quarters and the Negro Elks Club had provided cots for a number of men, but still the demand for housing was greater than the supply. The reporter lamented the housing problems confronting the authorities.

The irony of the concern over the lack of housing is illustrated by an article that had appeared on the front page of The Oregonian the previous day. Director of the Census, J. C. Capt, of Washington, D.C., stated that according to the reported vacancy rate, 58,000 more people could live in Portland without crowding.[14] Evidently Capt did not consider the racial aspect of the problem, a factor important to the people of Portland.

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[13]Oregonian, September 23, 1942, p. 1.

[14]Oregonian, September 22, 1942, p. 1.

The restricted district that housed most of the Negroes in 1940 extended from the east edge of the river to Union Avenue and stretched north from the Steel Bridge to Russell Avenue. After the Japanese were evacuated, Negroes moved into the area west of the river formerly occupied by the Japanese, thus relieving some of the pressure. Throughout the early period of the war, rumors abounded concerning construction of additional housing for Negro defense plant workers.[15] White inhabitants of Albina met in the fall of 1942 to protest a proposed dormitory to be built in their area for 500 Negro workers. Headed "Court Action Voted to Block Housing Plan for Negroes," the reporter cited an increase in crime as one of the major reasons for the whites' objection to the housing project.[16] Allowing the Negroes to fan out through the city, one spokesman predicted, would soon require a policeman on every corner. Another contended that the Negroes should be housed on the edge of the city. Inasmuch as the blacks already lived in a section of Albina, the whites in adjacent areas were particularly sensitive to increased expansion of the Negro area. Where the Negroes were housed did not matter to most whites as long as it was not near their own neighborhood. In this

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[15] Oregonian, October 4, 1942, p. 7.

[16] Oregonian, September 30, 1942, p. 1.

particular instance, the excitement was unwarranted because Henry Freeman, executive director of the Housing Authority of Portland, denied that any plans existed for a Negro dormitory in Albina. About fifteen dwelling units were planned, he claimed, but they could be occupied by either blacks or whites.[17]

The incident illustrates the tension that existed in the city during the early war years as rapid changes were taking place. Racially oriented protests, mostly on an individual or small group basis, were manifestations of the existing tension. Concern for the status quo was voiced by Earl Riley, mayor of Portland, when he warned that Portland could absorb only a small number of Negroes without upsetting the city's regular life.[18]

Mayor Riley's sentiments were also expressed in the black community. Some of the older residents were concerned that the influx of a large number of Negroes would cause the whites to become alarmed and to withdraw the privileges which blacks in Portland had accumulated. In addition, Negro residents in Albina were hard-pressed to find

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[17]Oregonian, October 4, 1942, p. 7.

[18]Oregonian, June 24, 1945, Magazine Section, p. 2.

space in which to accommodate the newcomers because Albina was overcrowded.[19]

The city of Portland did not have to absorb the total Negro population that migrated to the area. Because of the national emergency, Federal funds were available to build temporary wartime housing. It was to such housing projects as Vanport City and Guilds Lake that the majority of the Negroes moved; some also lived in Linton and Fairview Homes. With the exception of Linton, a small development, Negroes were restricted to segregated portions of the projects. Vanport, or Kaiserville as it was originally called, was north of the Portland city limits and was the largest project in the area with 10, 356 living units. In November of 1944 Vanport had a population of over 32,600 and was the second largest city in Oregon.[20] The number of blacks in Vanport at that time was over 5,800 or triple the Portland pre-war Negro population.

Within the city limits, concentrations of Negro housing developed. Figure 5 illustrates the clustering of Negro dwellings. Just east of the river was the traditional "colored" area expanding along Williams

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[19]Interview with E. Simpson Hill, Executive Director, Portland Urban League, October 15, 1969.

[20]City Club of Portland, "The Negro in Portland," Portland City Club Bulletin (Portland: City Club of Portland, 1945), p. 57.

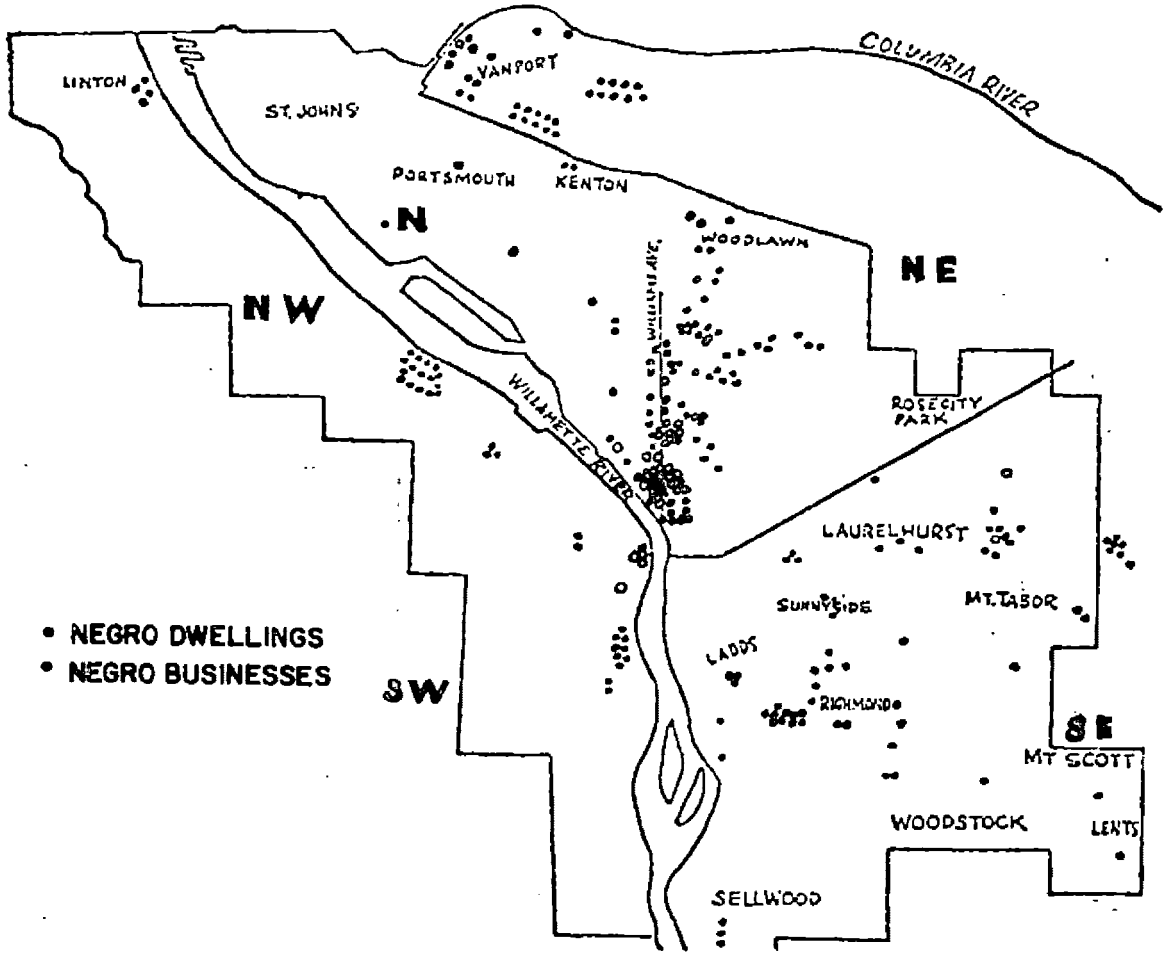

Fig. 5.--Areas of Negro Concentration: 1945
(Source: City Club of Portland, "The Negro in Portland.")

Avenue. The section near Richmond in the southeast part of the city housed Negroes employed by the nearby Union Pacific railroad yards. West of the Willamette River and north of the business district was the largest wartime housing development within the city limits, Guilds Lake, with over 2,600 units. All facilities and areas that tolerated blacks before the war were utilized during the emergency when housing needs became critical. The exact number of Negroes living in the Portland-Vancouver area during the war is unknown, but estimates range from 20,000 to 25,000.[21] When hostilities ceased and defense jobs were cut back, the number of blacks dropped sharply to approximately 9,500.

The reduction in population helped to relieve the pressure on existing facilities. Dormitories, which housed single men during the war, closed and men who had left their families in their home states either returned there or brought their families to Portland and sought dwellings. The temporary wartime projects continued to accommodate the demand for housing as the nation returned to a peacetime economy. In the first few years after the war, the geographic distribution of blacks as depicted in Figure 5 continued, although the blacks were fewer in number.

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[21]Interview with E. Simpson Hill, October 15, 22, 1969.

After the war, the two major problems facing the black in Portland were job opportunities and living accommodations. Although the same problems faced thousands of defense workers and returning servicemen, the blacks had two additional serious difficulties to overcome: their limited job skills and the racial prejudice of whites.

Prior to the end of the war, some people were already considering Oregon's peacetime economy and were concerned about the overabundant supply of labor that would accompany the phasing out of defense work. In June of 1945 Ron Moxness, staff writer for The Oregonian, interviewed Portlanders concerning their outlook on postwar conditions in the city. The general forecast was pessimistic. The writer was dismayed that some officials were still ". . . guided by the wishful thought that the Negroes will go back home [after the war] leaving the city untouched by racial problems."[22] Despite numerous meetings with community leaders in which the racial issue in Portland was discussed, Mayor Earl Riley, in the spring of 1945, still doubted that a race problem existed in the city.[23]

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[22]Ron Moxness, "Negro Postwar Outlook," Oregonian, June 17, 1945, Magazine Section, p. 8.

[23]Oregonian, June 24, 1945, Magazine Section, p. 2.; A month earlier the mayor heard the charge that social discrimination allegedly occurred in a Chinese restaurant. Relating the incident to the mayor, a Negro man reported that a Chinese waitress called to

Lack of foresight and planning can be attributed in part to the provincial attitude held by residents in the city. Moxness found many people worried about the disposition of the "shipyard workers" after the defense plants ceased production. The prevailing opinion was that after the war the community would take care of its own, but that it was in no position to care for additional population, black or white.[24]

As predicted, the end of the war with Japan affected the demand for labor. When The Oregonian announced in September of 1946, "Job Sources For Negroes Dry Up With End of War," the Negro population had dropped to approximately 11,000.[25] Expectations were that the black population would stabilize at about 10,000.

The lack of job opportunities continued to plague the blacks. Their second major problem, housing, with its underlying sociological implications, created an even greater furor in the city since the whites were particularly sensitive in this area. Some whites, however, recognized and criticized the racial discrimination shown in housing.

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his attention a sign, "We Cater to White Only." He exclaimed, "How the hell did you get in here?" According to the newspaper article, the mayor admitted that the Negro had a point and promised to investigate. Oregonian, May 25, 1945, p. 9.

[24]Ron Moxness, "Negro Postwar Outlook," Oregonian, June 17, 1945, Magazine Section, p. 8.

[25]Oregonian, September 8, 1946, p. 10.

For example, Clarence Ivy, assistant personnel manager for the Kaiser Company, advocated that real estate men and white property owners stop trying to impose their own concept of racial segregation. He predicted that if whites would sell and rent property according to the ability to pay, the Negro housing problem would almost completely disappear.[26] The majority of Negroes continued to be housed, either by coincidence or design, in particular sections of the wartime housing projects and in the "colored" section of Albina. The wartime housing was to be phased out within two years after the end of hostilities with Japan, and the question was asked of city officials, "Where will they [blacks] move in the city?" No answer was proposed.[27]

Guilds Lake and Vanport City continued to house the majority of the wartime Negro immigrants during the first years after the war. Vanport City, located outside the city limits between Portland and Vancouver, accommodated the largest number. Both housing projects were considered temporary, and in 1948 a section of Guilds Lake, 180 units, was demolished to make way for industrial development. Since this northwest section of the city was zoned for industry, planners had expected Guilds Lake to be completely razed earlier than Vanport City.

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[26]Oregonian, November 17, 1942, p. 1.

[27]Oregonian, October 24, 1945, p. 9.

Not included in the plan was a rapid spring thaw in the mountains and a weakened dike. On Memorial Day, 1948, the swollen waters broke through the railroad embankment that served as a dike to contain the river, and totally destroyed Vanport City. The question asked in 1945 concerning where the blacks of Vanport would move was now answered--they moved into the city of Portland.

Many blacks moved into vacant units at the Guilds Lake housing project. All the small housing projects were filled with refugees, black and white alike. Several spokesmen asserted that for the first time housing in Portland was assigned impartially, regardless of color. Estimates placed the number of Negroes flooded out at Vanport City at approximately 5,000.[28] Undoubtedly some Negroes left the Portland-Vancouver area following the disaster, but most of them remained. The additional blacks moving into the city taxed the existing facilities, and the boundaries of the black community in Albina kept expanding.

To most Portlanders, Albina is synonymous with the "Williams Avenue area" or Negro community. Because Albina was not a political

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[28]Editorial, Oregonian, June 4, 1948, p. 16. I believe that number to be excessive in that only 9,500 Negroes were recorded in the 1950 census.

subsection and did not have definite geographic boundaries, each group studying the area defined the term "Albina" as it would be used in their investigation.

In 1962 Albina was subject to a study by the Portland City Planning Commission. The area south of Fremont Street between Union Avenue and the Willamette River was the focus of the investigation and was designated as the "Central Albina Area." The members of the commission recognized the vagueness of Albina's boundaries, and, to avoid confusion, designated a larger area, from Killingsworth south to the Banfield Freeway between Interstate Avenue and NE 16th Avenue, as the "Study Area."[29]

The 1964 Committee on Race and Education of the Portland School District ". . . arbitrarily fixed 'Albina' as the attendance districts of elementary schools (K-8) with Negro enrollments exceeding 25 per cent in 1963-64."[30] This designation included the City Planning Commission's "Central Albina Area" but also protruded north

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[29]Research Memorandum, "Central Albina Study," Portland City Planning Commission, November, 1962; Race and Education Subcommittee on Community and Home Environment, School District No. I Curriculum Library, Portland, Oregon.

[30]Committee on Race and Education, Herbert M. Schwab, Chairman, Race and Equal Educational Opportunity in Portland's Public Schools: A Report to the Board of Education Multnomah School District No. I (Portland: The School District, 1964), p. 33. Hereinafter cited Race and Equal Educational Opportunity in Portland Public Schools.

beyond Fremont Street almost to Jefferson High School and extended several blocks east of Union Avenue. The Race and Education Committee agreed with the Planning Commission that the general public conceived Albina as including a much larger area in northeast Portland, but the committee's boundaries generally agreed with those set by the planning commission for their "Study Area." The most thought-provoking definition of Albina was offered by a Negro adult who mused, "Albina--that's wherever a Negro lives."

Albina, in the remainder of this study, will describe the general area in northeast Portland in which the majority of the blacks in the city live. When more precise geographic limits are needed, school attendance areas or specific census tracts will be cited.

The Jefferson High School attendance area is a part of Albina. How that section of Albina came to be "home" for Portland blacks is pertinent to this study. As previously stated, after the war, housing was one of the two major problems facing the blacks. Three factors influenced where they would live: the neighborhood school policy, racial discrimination practiced by real estate dealers, and racial prejudice on the part of the whites. The latter two factors were major deterrents to Negroes moving freely within the city. The neighborhood school policy was significant because school attendance areas became units by which the black community's expansion was measured.

School boundary lines were often limits beyond which black intrusion was strongly resisted. White residents of the city, especially those in Albina, carefully watched for any attempt on the part of Negroes to move into white neighborhoods. When the limited area available to the blacks became crowded, racial discrimination still prevented them from moving into other sections of the city.

An incident which occurred in 1947 brought to the attention of the public the blatant discrimination against Negroes seeking adequate housing. The catalyst causing the problem to be publicized was Portland's neighborhood school policy, a policy of which Portland was proud. For years the plan exemplified a concept of service to the community in that, generally speaking, the school board attempted to determine the direction and rate of growth in the city. On recommendation of the board, the school district purchased sites in anticipation of future expansion and built schools as the areas developed. The boundaries of the attendance area were drawn so that the children did not have to cross an arterial or walk more than a mile to school.

The influence of the neighborhood school policy went beyond merely determining which school children would attend. The attendance areas were used to distinguish neighborhoods as white, mixed, or black. For instance, as the blacks in Albina expanded north and occupied the southern edge of a school attendance area, whites in the

remainder of the area felt threatened. Because the black children attended the same school as the white children, whites attempted to transfer their children to other schools.

School board members would not adjust school boundaries solely to increase or decrease the number of white and Negro children in any school, nor would they adjust boundaries to affect the socio-economic composition of any student population.[31]

Portland's neighborhood school policy was seriously challenged in 1947. Prior to that time, complaints were made on an individual basis, but this new attack was an organized effort. Because of the overcrowded conditions at Eliot Elementary School, school board members voted to discontinue their plans to remodel the old Jane Addams High School for administrative office use. Instead the building was to be used as Holladay Elementary School and the school attendance areas were to be adjusted accordingly, in order to relieve the overcrowded conditions at Eliot.[32] Since Eliot was said to be 73 per cent black, many of the children transferring to Holladay would be black. The white parents in the Holladay attendance area protested

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[31] Race and Equal Educational Opportunity in Portland's Public Schools, p. 21.

[32] Oregonian, August 15, 1947, p. 23.

vehemently, but board members upheld the earlier decision retaining the neighborhood school policy and the established school boundaries. Representatives of Negro groups deplored the racial element being thrust into the Eliot school problem. They did not want segregated schools. Their principal complaint about Eliot, in addition to it being overcrowded, was that it was so dilapidated that they believed it unfit to be used for educational purposes.[33]

Some property owners in the Holladay area reasoned that Negro children in the school might encourage more Negroes to move into that section. Anonymous whites drew up a petition to enact a restrictive covenant in order to prevent an influx of blacks. Residents circulated the petition soliciting property owners to restrict residential property sales to white persons only.

The civil liberties committee of the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) entered the skirmish with a counter-proposition. Warning the Holladay district residents that "Democracy has no boundaries," the ADA position was a satirical parallel in its wording to the earlier petition advocating the restrictive covenant.[34] The League of Women Voters also officially condemned the restrictive covenant. They

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[33]Ibid.; an estimate of 35 per cent Negro enrollment for 1947 is more accurate.

[34]Oregonian, December 7, 1947, p. 25.

declared that ". . . it is directly counter to the American concept of equal opportunity for all."[35]

Neither in the 1940's nor in the 1950's did the Negroes receive "equal opportunity" in competing for housing. Reginald Johnson, field secretary of the National Urban League, while in Portland in 1944 to assist in establishing a local branch of the Urban League, declared that housing should be provided according to economic class levels and not be determined by race.[36]

His suggestion was not followed, however, and the Urban League reported in 1947 that practically no new housing was being planned for Negro occupancy. The report asserted that a high degree of residential segregation had been effected by the simple means of decreeing it a breach of ethics for a member of the realty board to sell or rent to Negroes in other than designated areas. Such tactics assured Negroes of getting worn out, "hand-me-down" property that no one else wanted.[37]

Until the 1950's, the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) included in its code of ethics a requirement to maintain

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[35]Oregonian, December 16, 1947, p. 12.

[36]Oregonian, December 14, 1944.

[37]Oregonian, March 9, 1947, p. 1.

racial homogeneity. "A realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood."[38]

In 1949 a real estate dealer was expelled by the Portland Realty Board for a breach of this ethic by selling a house located in a white neighborhood to a black. "On the north side of Hawthorne Street there are colored people," the dealer stated, "but since I sold property on the south side . . . I am unethical."[39]

In the 1950's, the NAREB rescinded that section from its code of ethics. Some realtors circumvented the spirit of the change and twisted article 34 of the Realtor's Code of Ethics to suit their own purposes. The article states, "A realtor should not be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or use which will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood." This article was used by some persons as a subterfuge to avoid selling property in white neighborhoods to Negroes.[40]

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[38]League of Women Voters of Portland, "An Examination of the Attitudes, Policies and Procedures Which Affect the Application of the Oregon 1959 Fair Housing Law" (Portland: The League of Women Voters of Portland, 1962), p. 6.

[39]Oregonian, January 13, 1949, p. 1.

[40]See Appendix VII.

In 1957 a committee of the City Club of Portland investigating the conditions of Portland's Negroes flatly stated ". . . it is common knowledge in many circles that 90 per cent or more of the real estate brokers in Portland will not sell a home to a Negro in a white neighborhood even though the prospective buyer can handle the deal financially."[41] Thus real estate dealers' practices and strong community attitude limited expansion of the black community to sections adjacent to areas of black concentration in Albina.

Integrated neighborhoods in southern Albina became black as white families moved out and black families replaced them. The black community expanded north toward Jefferson High School as the dilapidated sections along Williams Avenue were released to black occupancy. The rate and direction of expansion influenced the racial composition of the schools in the path of the spreading black residential pattern. As the elementary schools in Jefferson's attendance area increased in black enrollment, Jefferson's racial composition was also to change.

By observing Figures 6, 7, and 8, the changes that occurred over a twenty-year period can be seen. The demographic maps reveal

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[41]City Club of Portland, "The Negro in Portland: A Progress Report 1945-57," Portland City Club Bulletin (Portland: City Club of Portland, 1957), p. 359.

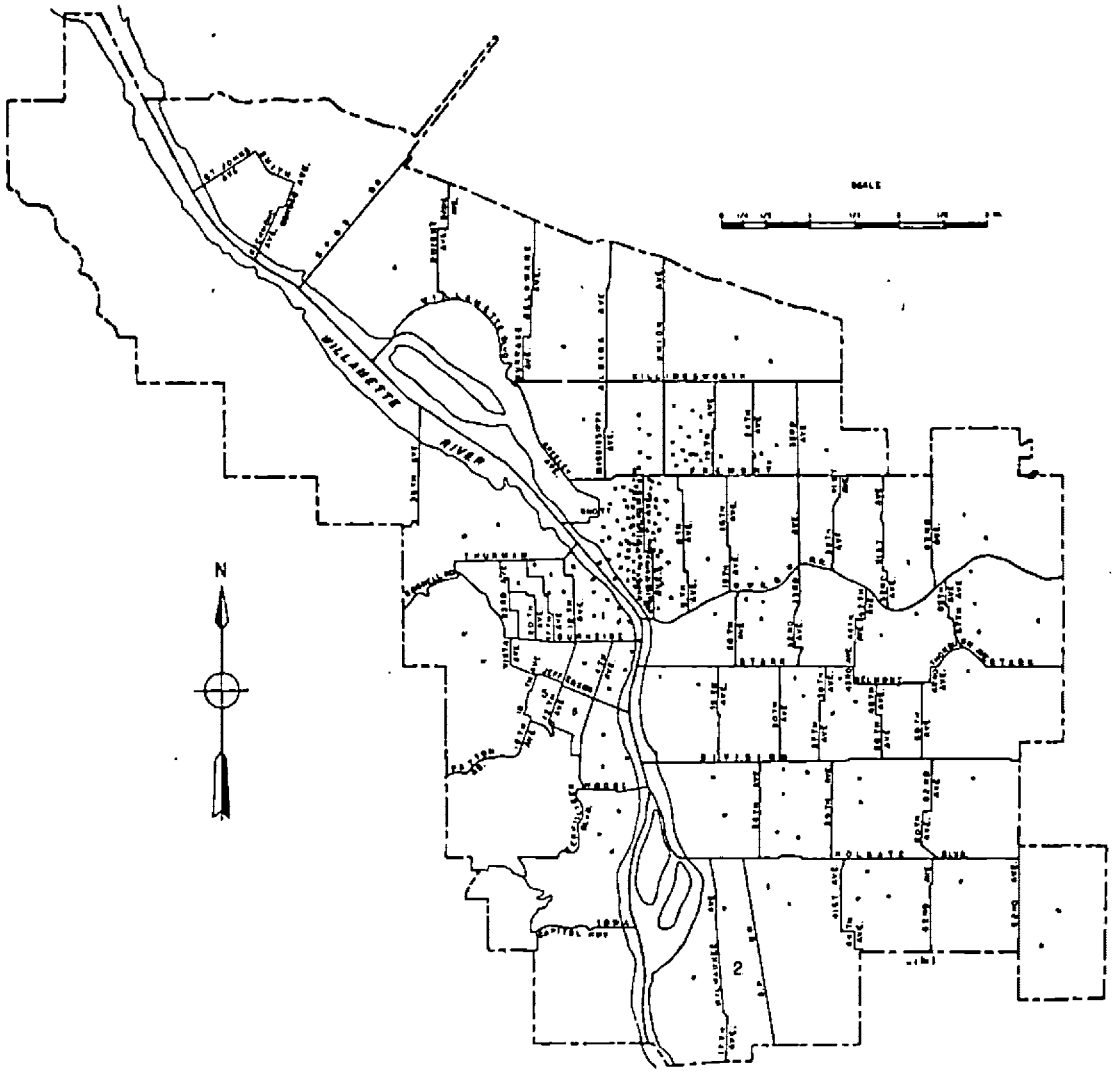


Fig. 6.--Distribution of Negro Population: 1940 (Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. U. S. Census of Population: 1940, Statistics for Census Tracts by Cities.)

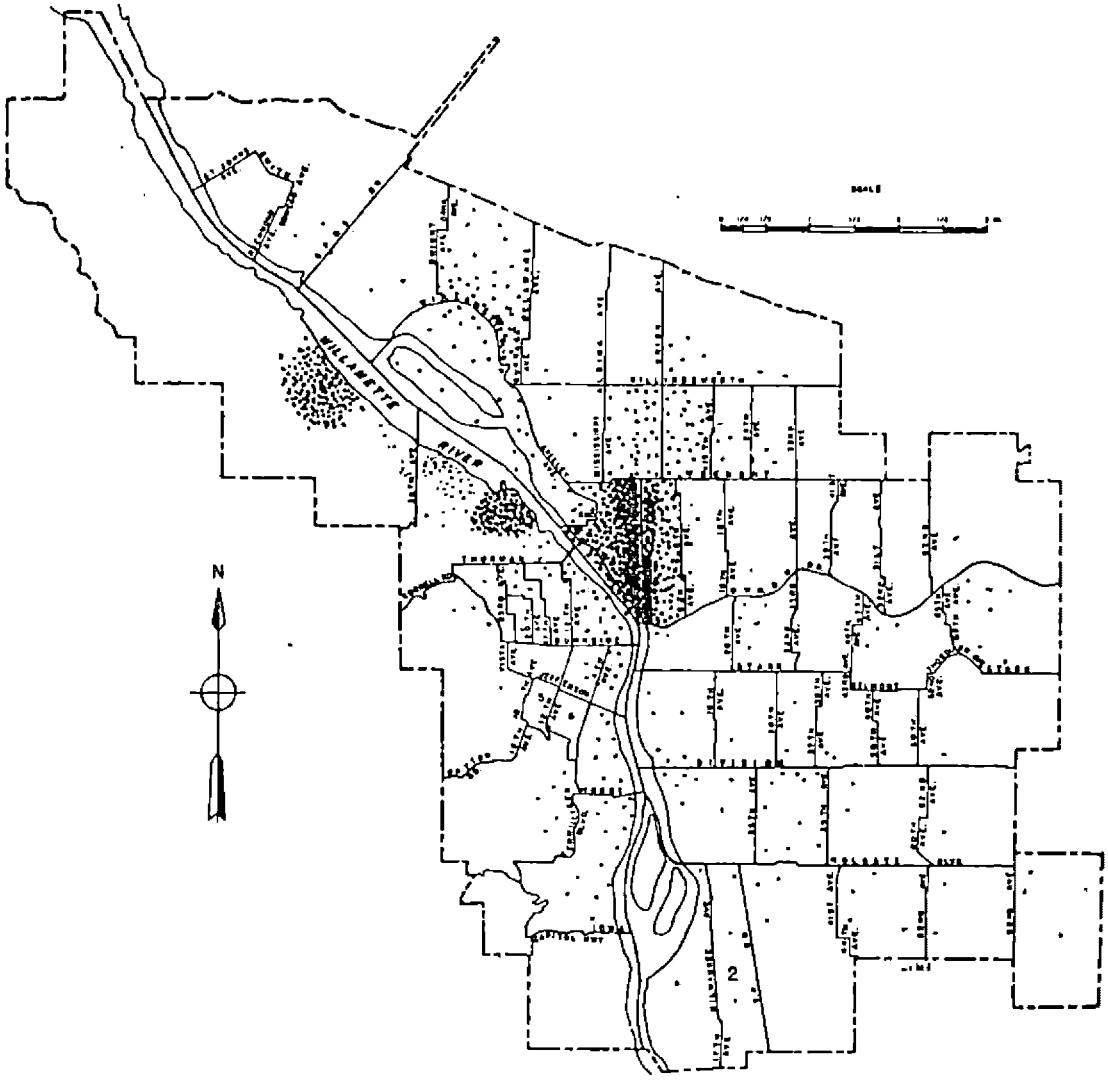
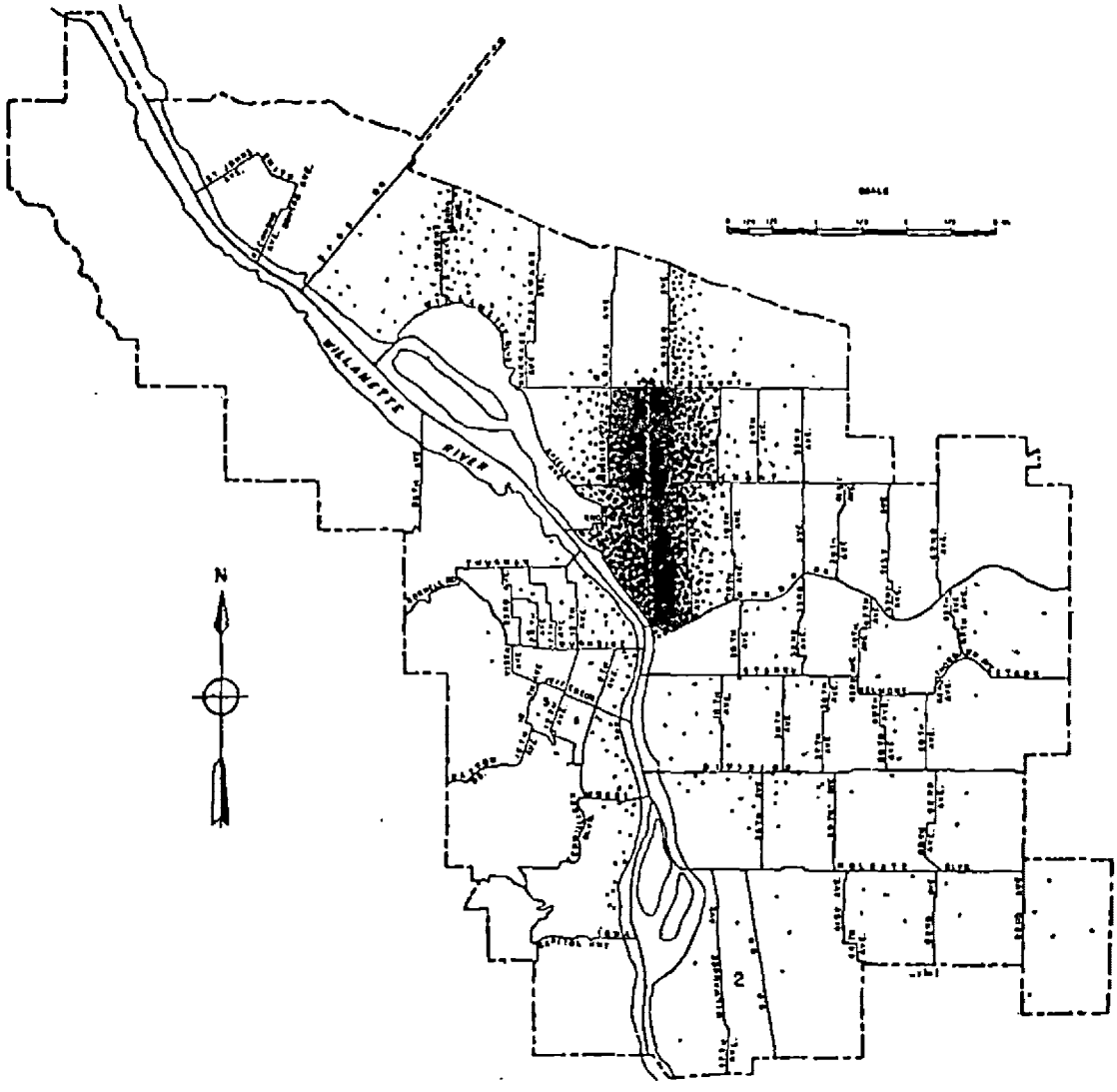


Fig. 7.--Distribution of Negro Population: 1950 (Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. U. S. Census of Population: 1950, Vol. III, Census Tract Statistics, Chapter 63.)



· REPRESENTS 10 PEOPLE

Fig. 8.--Distribution of Negro Population: 1960 (Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. U. S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts. Final Report PHC (1)-121.)

the shift in black population, but do not show the outflow of whites from the Albina section. The absolute changes in population of Albina are shown in Table 3. The twenty years of expansion of the black residential area directly influenced the racial composition of Jefferson High School.

In 1940 Negroes lived in almost all of the census tracts in Portland, but the vast majority, over 60 per cent, lived in the four specified census tracts. In actuality, they were largely concentrated (over 50 per cent) in census tracts 22 and 23. From the east bank of the river, the area of Negro concentration stretched across Williams Avenue to Union Avenue. The greatest density was from Williams Avenue west to the Willamette River.

By 1950 the number of blacks in northeast Portland was triple the 1940 figure and Negro dwellings spread to east of Union Avenue and north of Fremont. Just over 50 per cent of Portland's Negroes lived in Albina representing a seemingly significant decline in percentage compared to 1940, a decline which could be interpreted as an indication that the Negro population was dispersing throughout the city. Census tract analysis supports the contention that Negroes were scattered throughout Portland living in 58 of the 61 census tracts. The contention is misleading, however, for many of the tracts contained but one or two Negro families, indicating no significant change from the

TABLE 3

ALBINA POPULATION[a]

	1940[b]	1950[c]	1960[d]
Total Population	26,438	28,589	22,816
White Population	24,972	23,215	11,013
Negro Population	1,161	5,064	11,431
% White of Total Population	94.5	81.2	48.2
% Negro of Total Population	4.4	17.7	50.1
% Negro of Total Negro Population in Portland	60.1	53.1	73.1

[a]Census tracts 22, 23, 33, and 34 for years 1940 and 1950 are, with slight changes, the same as 22A, 22B, 23A, 23B, 33A, 33B, 34A, and 34B for the census in 1960.

[b]U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940: Population, Statistics for Census Tracts by Cities.

[c]U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of Population: 1950 Vol. III, Census Tract Statistics, Chapter 63.

[d]U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960. Final Report PHC (1)-121.

previous decade. A primary factor that reduced the percentage of Portland's Negroes in Albina during the 1950 census was not dispersion but the large concentration of blacks in two wartime housing projects. Guilds Lake and Mocks Bottom, located in census tracts 43 and 45 on the west side of the Willamette River, contained almost 2,400 Negroes.

These two housing projects closed in the 1950's and their Negro inhabitants moved to northeast Portland where, by 1960, large numbers of Negroes were living as far north as Killingsworth Street and as far south as the Banfield Freeway. Interstate Avenue marked the western boundary and 18th Street, the eastern limits. Within the specified census tracts lived 73 per cent of the black population of Portland. The remaining 37 per cent were not evenly distributed throughout the city but were concentrated mainly in two census tracts just outside the Albina area. One tract lay to the east and the other to the north, penetrating to the northern edge of the Jefferson High School attendance area. Thus, a considerable portion of the Negroes not actually living in Albina proper represented a vanguard enlarging that area.[42]

The northern movement of blacks into the Jefferson High School attendance area is reflected in the change of Negro enrollment

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[42]Race and Equal Education Opportunity in Portland Public Schools, p. 34.

at Jefferson's "feeder schools." Prior to the 1962-63 school year, school administrators did not officially record by race the number of children in each school. All percentages prior to that date, shown in Table 4, are estimates made by W. A. Oliver, Assistant Superintendent of Portland's schools.[43]

Eliot Elementary School, located near the center of the Negro residential area, had a substantial percentage of black students as early as 1947-48. Only those students living in the northern portion of the Eliot attendance area, however, attended Jefferson High School. That area was eliminated in 1965 when the southern boundary of Jefferson's attendance areas, as shown in Figure 9, was moved several blocks north from Russell Street to Fremont Street. This boundary change eliminated all the students attending Eliot and part of those attending Boise Elementary School from the Jefferson High School district.

By 1965, however, the leading edge of the blacks' expansion was far to the north. Williams Avenue marked the center of density of Negro population; Figure 9 shows most of the predominantly Negro schools located near this arterial.

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[43]Letter from W. A. Oliver, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, to John S. Holley, Portland Urban League, dated October 27, 1961. Files of the Portland Urban League.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE OF NEGRO ENROLLMENT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
IN THE JEFFERSON ATTENDANCE AREA

School	1940	1950	1955	1960	1963 -64	1964 -65	1965 -66	1966 -67	1967 -68	1968 -69
Applegate					2.9	1	4	4	2	.7
Beach					6.9	7	11	14	14	13.9
Boise	5	35	75	94	96.3	96	99	98	93	90
Chief Joseph					.2	0	1	1	2	1.4
Eliot	10	55	85	96	96.1	94	91	74	92	51.3
Highland/King	3	15	60	75	79.3	87	92	93	94	93.8
Humbolt				75	89.9	92	91	93	91	87.8
Kenton					1.2	3	4	4	5	6.5
Ockley Green					2.0	5	7	8	11	10.9
Vernon				8	11.6	16	20	25	27	35.8
Woodlawn	1	5	10	15	22.3	27	32	37	38	34.8

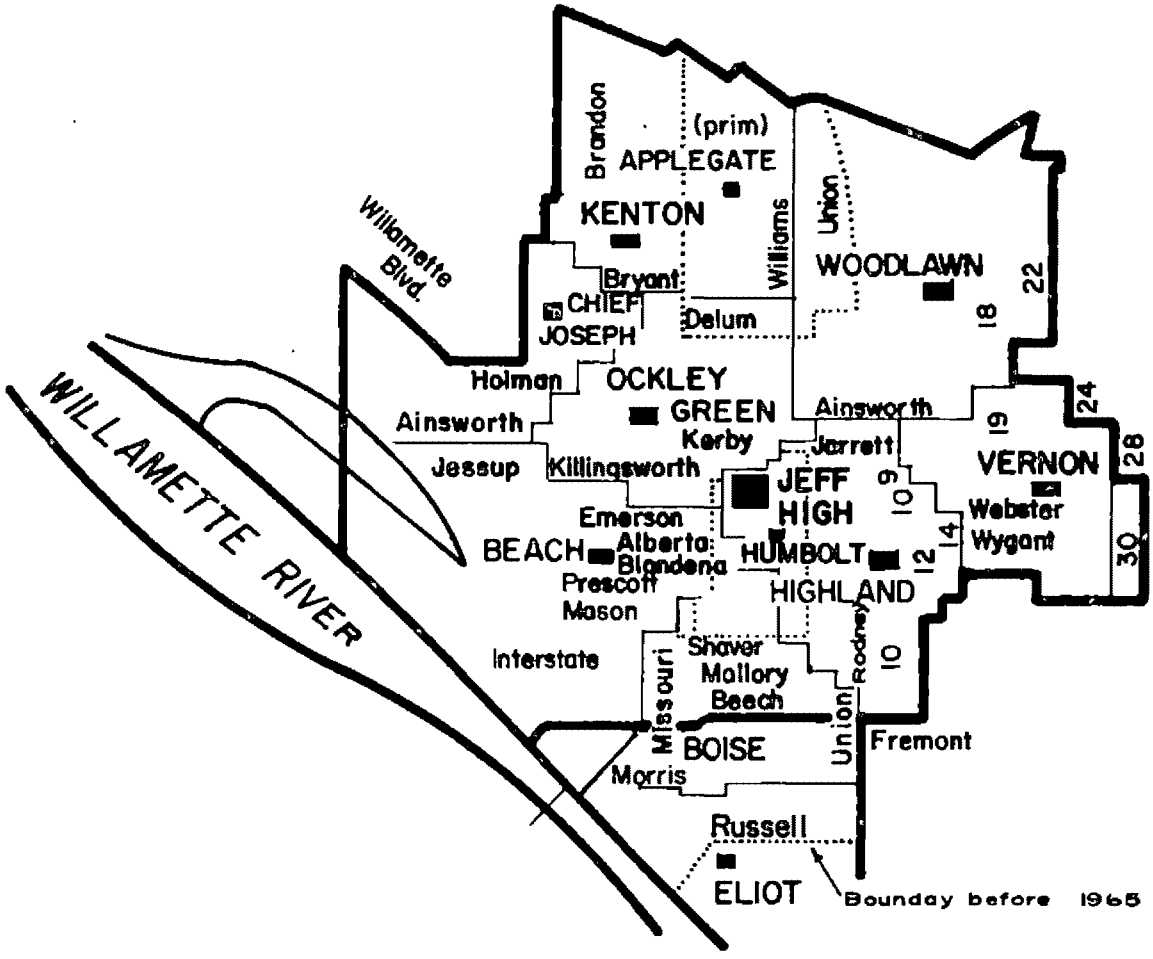

Fig. 9.--Jefferson High School Attendance Area

Shortly after the war, the elementary schools first reflected the change in the composition of Albina's population, but Jefferson High School's change in racial composition was not to become noticeable until the late 1950's.

CHAPTER V

JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL DURING WORLD WAR II AND TO 1954

Portland's public school system, as well as all the municipal facilities in the city, was severely taxed by the increased wartime population. Simply finding adequate space to accommodate the elementary school pupils was one of the major problems of the school administration.

At the secondary level, the concerns of the students and the school officials were of a different nature. Many of the students at Jefferson High School were mature and eager to assume an adult's role in the wartime society. The labor shortage provided them an opportunity to work and aid the war effort, while legally they were required to attend school. Furthermore, traditional courses did not fit the current atmosphere. The war was uppermost in the minds of all Americans and it permeated every aspect of their lives. Work, entertainment, and even advertising was directed toward a war-related society. Educators also sought ways to incorporate a wartime theme into the school program.

The sudden influx of large numbers of children upset the orderly expansion of educational facilities. To further complicate

matters, planners were unable to obtain in advance even reasonably accurate estimates of the number of children to expect for a coming school year.

Officials generally anticipated a decline in the number of secondary school students, but an increase in elementary school pupils. In the summer of 1943, for instance, school officials announced that they were planning for 750 to 1,200 additional elementary students in the fall.[1] Their plans included adding temporary classrooms, as they had the previous year, and reactivating Sitton Elementary School. Sitton had been closed for several years, during which time it was utilized as a storage building, but its location near the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation made its reactivation as an elementary school a logical move.

The chairman of the school board requested Federal assistance to provide temporary school buildings for children whose parents were employed in the defense industries. A twenty-two room elementary school adjacent to the Guilds Lake housing project would, he believed, alleviate the overcrowded condition of the schools in that section of the city.[2] Board members expected favorable consideration for their

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[1] Oregonian, July 22, 1943, p. 11.

[2] Ibid.

request because the United States government provided funds for the elementary schools at Vanport City.

Despite the advance planning, when school commenced in the fall of 1943, facilities were over-crowded. Chapman Elementary School, which had been enlarged, Sitton Elementary School, and George Elementary School were forced to hold double sessions. These schools and all others located near defense housing projects were hard-pressed to find room to accommodate the pupils.[3]

The secondary schools in the city did not fare as badly as the elementary. Vanport City high school students were bused into Portland where most of them attended Roosevelt and Jefferson High Schools. During the 1943-44 school year, approximately 500 students commuted to high school in Portland. Those attending Jefferson High School helped increase its enrollment of 2,060 students, making it the largest school in the city.[4] The influx of secondary school students caused by the wartime population more than offset the number of students leaving school to enlist in the armed forces or to work in the defense plants.

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[3]Oregonian, September 8, 1943, p. 1.

[4]Ibid., p. 12.

A large number of older boys and some girls from Jefferson High School did work in defense-related jobs. Some of the boys were employed full-time in the shipyards. With the cooperation of school officials, their schedules were so arranged that they were able to remain in school and yet make a contribution to the war effort.

Other school policies were adjusted to accommodate the unusual demands placed on youth because of the war. Many Jefferson students replaced adults in forest-protection posts and in the food-processing industries. Because they were required to work beyond the date when school would normally begin, school officials made special allowances for them. The superintendent of schools announced early in August of 1943 that students so engaged would be permitted to enroll late.[5] All that was required was a statement from their employers to the effect that they were working. Such accommodation was a reflection of the general attitude prevalent during the war years of adjusting policy and rules to help solve immediate problems.

Wartime demands and problems also affected the teaching staff at Jefferson High School. Teachers who were members of the armed forces reserves were ordered to active duty and others volunteered for service. The inclination to contribute directly to the war

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[5]Oregonian, August 12, 1943, p. 1.

effort was not limited solely to the male faculty. One woman teacher left to become a Red Cross director with the armed forces and another became an officer in the WAVES.[6]

As staff members departed, it was difficult to obtain replacements. The higher salaries paid by the defense industries, in addition to the attitude that becoming a "shipyard worker" would help to hasten the end of the war, made recruiting of teachers difficult. Loyalty to Jefferson kept some teachers at their posts and brought other retired teachers back to the classrooms.

During the war years, pictures of the Jefferson High School staff in the school yearbook, The Spectrum, reflected the high demand of the wartime emergency for young men: the staff was older and predominantly female.[7] Women teachers had always been in the majority at Jefferson High School, but their percentage increased during the 1942-45 period.

Wartime exigency, again as in World War I, invaded Jefferson High School and influenced the curriculum. The effect was not as emotionally based as in 1918, but it influenced the curriculum more

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[6]The Spectrum, 1943.

[7]The Spectrum, 1942-1945.

deeply. Perhaps this difference can be partly attributed to the peoples' acceptance of the concept of "total war" and the long duration of hostilities.

The "total war" concept demanded that complete utilization of the nation's resources be directed toward the war effort. The greatest basic resource in America was its youth, according to educational leaders who declared that they would be remiss if they continued "school as usual." These men believed that their duty was to prepare the youth of the nation for the responsibilities and opportunities resulting from "total war."[8]

As a direct consequence of these expressions of concern, the State Department of Education forwarded a directive to all school districts generally outlining a wartime curriculum. The Victory Corps Program: A Wartime Program for High Schools, was the result of a national committee established by the United States Office of Education. Membership on the committee included representatives from various facets of the educational groups. Parent-teacher organizations, library associations, and health associations were all represented, as well as school superintendents, principals, teachers, and

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[8]D. A. Emerson and Joy Hills, The Victory Corps Program: A Wartime Program For High Schools (Salem, Oregon: Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1943), p. 1.

college and university presidents. Working sub-committees called upon secondary education specialists and experts from the Army and Navy to aid in developing the high school Victory Corps Program.[9]

A directive issued by Rex Putnam, Superintendent of Public Instruction for Oregon, indicated that the Victory Corps was a voluntary organization for high schools and entirely under the supervision of the local schools. The Victory Corps Program was designed to train the youth for active participation in military service, war production, and essential community service occupations.[10] The program's objectives were to be accomplished by modifying the content and emphasis of the existing curriculum and, in some instances, deleting parts of the traditional offerings. Which portions of a subject the teacher should delete or retain were not specified in the directive; the decision was left to the active teaching staff. The authors of the directive admitted that it had been difficult to state what might be finally eliminated, ". . . as almost all that we do has value."[11]

The directive proposed that a program in wartime citizenship should be a part of the English and social studies courses. The following questions suggested a shift in emphasis:

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[9]Ibid., p. 2.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., p. 7.

1. Could some work in short story and essay now given in English be profitably replaced by more instruction in grammar, and in correct and concise usage, both written and spoken?

2. Should more emphasis be given in the classroom to correct usage of the spoken word with attention to diction and enunciation?

3. Could some of the work in American and English literature be replaced by current history? Where this was done, however, preparation should be thorough and the material studied should be studied for definite purpose.

4. Could some of the current social studies programs be replaced with offerings which are more in keeping with the times and would have greater educational value?[12]

Jefferson High School's adaptation of the program extended beyond the English and social studies curricula. In science and mathematics, teachers connected the classroom work with related phases of military or defense work. Pre-aeronautics and principles of flight were introduced as units of study in physics. Students also studied meteorology and the functions of various instruments connected to the study of the weather. Handbooks furnished by military agencies

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[12] Ibid. In the early 1960's, a rapidly-growing though still small minority would ask school officials to look again at the needs of the community. Those same questions which had been asked concerning the citizenship courses in the Victory Program could, with some modification, be posed with the problems of the inner city in mind. This minority would urge that the system be changed once more to meet the needs of the community--this time the black community.

provided realism for the courses as well as serving as basic textbooks.[13]

With the war being fought on many fronts, map reading had become important. Geography took on new meaning as the usual memorization of capitals and products gave way to the study of the relationships of the land masses of the world. In addition, students gained a better understanding of the problems of logistics as they computed distances between countries in terms of flying or sailing time.[14]

A major departure from the traditional program occurred in physical education. The staff abandoned the practice of teaching "carry over" sports such as handball, tennis, and golf, with emphasis on good sportsmanship and fair play. Replacing the old supervised "play periods" were rough and tumble "gym" classes stressing contact sports. Physical education emphasized wrestling, commando-style wall scaling, and rope climbing for boys, as well as calesthenics designed to build up shoulder, back, and leg muscles.[15] Stories concerning the rigors of jungle warfare stirred those persons responsible

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[13]Richard Nokes, "It's M Day at School," Oregonian, January 24, 1943, Magazine Section, pp. 4-5.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

for physical training to do their utmost to adequately prepare the youths for whatever demands might lie ahead.

The effectiveness or degree of influence that the new curriculum had on the Jefferson students is difficult to determine. One teacher commented that the focus of the subject matter shifted somewhat and war-related examples were used in class, but he felt that the basic content was about the same. Another stated, "I cannot remember that I actually changed my classes much," but she hastened to add, ". . . the subject of the war was always in evidence."[16]

Aceptance of the Victory Program required a shift from the traditional long range educational objectives. The wartime curriculum was designed to prepare the youth to solve immediate problems in order to accept the responsibilities that would be thrust upon them when leaving high school during the war emergency. By design, the curriculum and its goals were sharp departures from tradition. In actual practice, the differences perhaps were not so drastic, but the public's reaction was to the conceptual model rather than to what actually took place in the classrooms. The community accepted the new program because it believed at the time that the change was necessary. Throughout the country, and especially in areas of concentrated

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[16]Interviews with teachers who were at Jefferson High School during the war years.

defense industries such as Portland, there was a loud and continuous clamor through newspapers and radio to support the war effort. Because the people supported the change, or at least were in agreement with the goals of the wartime curriculum, little if any criticism was heard.

When school commenced in the fall of 1944, the students commuting from Vanport City and the crowded conditions in Albina raised Jefferson's enrollment to 2,145. Since the war ended the following year, 1944 was the last year of the Victory Program. Unlike the 1918 war period, school officials lost no time in returning to the traditional curriculum. Interest at Jefferson, as in the rest of the city, had begun to focus on a conflict between "progressive education" and the "traditional approach."

A controversy was touched off in 1945 when William B. Spaulding, the superintendent of Portland's schools, announced that there was to be a shift of emphasis in the secondary schools, most of which would become "comprehensive" high schools, offering a general academic course to all students in the freshman and sophomore years. During the junior and senior years, the few students who so desired would be able to attend technical courses at Benson Polytechnic High School, but Spaulding implied that he expected most students to pursue an academic course rather than the technical courses such as

had been offered previously at the district's specialized schools.[17] The old system of vocational training was out of date, the superintendent declared.

When in 1916 Benson High School began offering courses in blacksmithing, woodworking, and machine shop work, there was a need for such training. At that time boys did not go beyond elementary school, and with the vocational training courses they were able to obtain work. Rapid changes in technology, Spaulding claimed, had out-moded the old system.[18]

The sense of unity the community had experienced during the war quickly disappeared with the cessation of hostilities, along with the cooperative spirit which grew out of the single goal shared by all the people--to win the war. Dr. Spaulding's announced intention to alter the school system was an open invitation for opposing factions to form. To add to the controversy, a large number of new staff members were employed during the late 1940's. These teachers brought with them various teaching methods from colleges outside of Oregon and concepts which at times conflicted with the traditional practices then employed.

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[17]Editorial, Oregonian, December 16, 1945, p. 22.

[18]Ibid.

The school system for the next several years was severely criticized by groups such as the one generally referred to in the press as the "traditionalists." This group's criticism fell into three clearly-defined categories:

1. Schools were not teaching fundamental subjects as well as in the past.
2. Discipline, both physical and mental, was not adequate.
3. The "no flunking" policy and existing report card system discouraged the abler students and offered no incentive to the dull students.[19]

Another group, the "progressives," was concerned for the "whole child" and ridiculed rote memory and drill work in the school. They pointed out that the school policy contained the statement ". . . that the school should respect the individuality of the child." The editor of The Oregonian believed that this latter statement, with its many ramifications, helped to explain the complexity of the educational problem.[20]

At the height of the controversy, in June, 1950, Paul A. Rehmus, the new superintendent of Portland's schools, in an effort to quiet the argument, issued a statement of school policy concerning curriculum. He embraced neither position but attempted to draw the

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[19]Oregonian, June 4, 1950, p. 1.

[20]Editorial, Oregonian, January 7, 1950, p. 11.

best from both. He placated the "traditionalists" by admitting that every child must, within his capability, learn certain fundamentals such as reading, writing, spelling, and grammar. The opposite camp was heartened to hear him say that the teachers and principals must constantly and sympathetically study the children and youth as this was the only means by which they would understand the conditions, the capabilities, the interests, and the needs of each child. Rehmus concluded by stating, "In Portland we are holding to the middle of the road."[21]

Because of the controversy, the University of Portland initiated a study of the public schools in Portland. Researchers compared the scholastic records of the graduating senior classes for the 1948-49 school year in all of Portland's secondary schools. Jefferson High School students had the highest grade-point-average, 2.48, in the city. Students from Portland who continued on to college, the study indicated, were not in any way handicapped.[22]

At Jefferson the emphasis had been on academic excellence. When, in the early 1950's, natural groupings of students failed to produce homogeneous classes, school officials used "tracking" or "streaming" techniques, a process which tended to segregate into separate

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[21] Oregonian, June 11, 1950, Class., p. 1.

[22] Oregonian, June 13, 1950, p. 22.

classes those students who were ill-prepared or who lacked the ability to perform high-school-level work. At this period in time, the students in the slower classes at Jefferson were not predominantly Negro.

Prior to the war, Jefferson High School had had only a few Negro students. William Reynolds, M.D., a Negro who was graduated from Jefferson in the early 1940's, recalls that there were only four or five Negroes in the school during the time he attended. Jefferson's enrollment then was approximately 1,800 students.[23]

The number of Negroes at Jefferson High School increased only slightly during the war years. Because the school was well to the north of the areas of Negro concentration, only a few students from Eliot, the school with the highest percentage of blacks, attended Jefferson.

Pictures of the graduating class began to include more students who had transferred to Jefferson from other states. Representatives appeared from Ada, Minnesota; Fargo, North Dakota; and Mason City, Iowa; as well as Columbus, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; and Tyler, Texas.[24] In the June, 1944, graduating class, about one-third

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[23]Minutes of meeting, Race and Education, Subcommittee on the Effect of Governmental Agencies on Educational Achievement, November, 1963.

[24]Ron Moxness, "Negro Postwar Outlook," Oregonian, June 17, 1945, Magazine Section, p. 8.

of the students who had transferred to Jefferson High School were from outside the state of Oregon. Many more white students than black transferred from other states and it was not until after the war that the number of graduating black students exceeded ten.[25]

Recalling the Negro students she had known at Jefferson prior to 1954, one teacher commented that ". . . they were the better-class Negroes." Their parents wanted them to get a good education, she declared, and did not allow any nonsense.[26]

Negroes at Jefferson were not segregated, but neither were they integrated. The sections of The Spectrum devoted to student government and to the social activities in the school indicate that there was little or no racial integration of black and white students. Occasionally, however, an individual black student was very active in student government and extra-curricular activities. As a rule such a student possessed unusual ability and was an outstanding member of the class. In 1950, for instance, a Negro was president of the student body and also participated in most of those activities open to a Negro. For most blacks at this time, however, school did not

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[25]The Spectrum, 1940-1949.

[26]Interview with teacher who had taught at Jefferson High school during the 1940's and 1950's.

include involvement in extra-curricular activities; they simply attended classes.

"Bid" clubs, which students were invited to join, at times included Oriental students, but no black members were pictured. "Open" clubs, which accepted all members who had a common interest, showed Negro members only rarely. The extra-curricular interests which apparently first attracted blacks in significant numbers were musically-oriented activities. Both boys and girls were members of the Glee Club, Acapella Choir, band, and orchestra.[27]

Athletics, the traditional avenue through which a Negro could achieve public acclaim on the national scene, was also the means most frequently used to gain recognition at Jefferson High School. In 1940 the most popular player on the football team was a Negro boy. Because of the limited number of Negroes at Jefferson prior to the late 1950's, they did not stand out as a group on the athletic squads, but they competed as individuals and won positions on the teams. Critics of the school have made the point that, in order to gain the position, a Negro player was required to be vastly superior to any of his white competitors.[28]

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[27]The Spectrum, 1940-1954.

[28]Interview with black parent with interest in Jefferson High School during this period.

The relationship between black and white teammates during this period of time was not strained. Tempers flared up on occasion and clashes occurred, but on an individual, not a racial, basis.[29] The quarrel was just as likely to involve two white youths as a black and a white, perhaps more likely because there were more white boys on the teams. Asked to recall his attitude toward Negro students and teammates, one former Jefferson student replied, "I didn't think anything about them. They were there and that's all."[30]

In 1954 the staff at Jefferson High School was not particularly concerned about racial segregation in the schools. Their opinion, like that of most Northerners, was that segregation in education was a problem of the South since such practices did not exist in the North. Jefferson High School was, in 1954, a white, lower middle-class comprehensive high school.

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[29]Interview with a white student athlete who attended Jefferson High School in the late 1940's.

[30]Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL 1954-1960

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND "COLOR-BLINDNESS"

In 1954 the Supreme Court decision of Brown versus Topeka, Kansas, Board of Education marked the end of the "separate but equal" philosophy which had in effect limited the educational opportunities of most blacks in the United States. The majority of teachers at Jefferson High School thought that the decision was inapplicable to Portland because separate Negro schools had been discontinued there in 1871. Teachers made a concerted effort to "see" blacks only as students, not specifically as black students. The same academic standards were applied to all.

During the period from 1954 to 1960, the student, as an individual, was not the focus of attention; the focus was upon attaining academic excellence. Jefferson High School, as part of the Portland school system, was deeply committed to curriculum changes. These changes were aimed at increasing the academic quality of the courses and challenging the academically gifted. Although individual teachers may have attempted to aid black students in their classes, officially

the faculty did not recognize deficiencies of the school curriculum in meeting the needs of the blacks.

As a comprehensive high school, Jefferson was, however, committed to meeting the "needs of all its students." In the early 1950's approximately 35 to 40 per cent of its graduates matriculated at various colleges and universities, and the college preparatory courses received strongest emphasis. The remaining 65 per cent of the students did not, as one might expect, take a markedly different course of instruction. They studied the same material in a diluted form.

Non-college bound students who were academically capable often completed the college preparatory course. For others, the curriculum included general mathematics, general science, and similar courses which met the requirements for graduation. Vocational courses, in which many blacks enrolled, were at an introductory level, and classes in industrial arts and home economics did not prepare youths to earn a living.

By tradition, Jefferson's educational goals were similar to those espoused in 1959 by James B. Conant, the prominent educator. Jefferson's administrators believed that a comprehensive high school should provide general education for all students, suitable electives for those students entering the labor market after high school, and

adequate preparation for students continuing their education in a college or university.[1]

Similar to Conant's recommendations, Jefferson High School's curriculum tended toward academic subjects rather than the vocational courses which may have benefited many of the black students. Teachers at Jefferson were, as the superintendent of schools stated in 1950, "continually evaluating and up-grading the curriculum of the school."[2]

As early as 1947, select students from Portland's secondary schools were permitted to enroll in special courses at Reed College. In 1952 this arrangement led to Portland's Educational Enrichment Program which was designed to challenge academically capable students.[3] Prior to the Russian launching of Sputnik, several other curricular experiments, all affecting the college-bound students, were tried at Jefferson High School. The school administrators initiated such changes in the belief that they were fulfilling the needs of Jefferson's students and satisfying parents' expectations.

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[1]James B. Conant, The American High School Today (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), p. 17; Carl Cluff, "Jefferson High Holds to Early Traditions," Oregon Journal, February 29, 1956, p. 1.

[2]Oregonian, June 11, 1950, Class. p. 1.

[3]Albert Kitzhaber and Alburey Castell, Introduction to the Study, The Portland High School Curriculum Study, Vol. I (Multnomah County, Oregon: School District No. 1, 1959), p. 4.

Kenneth A. Erickson conducted a study in Portland in 1953 to measure parental reactions to the school program. Roughly interpreted, the findings indicated that most parents wanted a curriculum that was subject-oriented rather than "student-oriented." Seventy per cent of them wanted subjects offered in which students could do acceptable work and which the students would find interesting and worthwhile. Notwithstanding such evidence, in almost all instances, administrators believed that parents were more satisfied with the curriculum than the parents actually indicated.[4]

When the blacks in Jefferson High School began to clamor for change in the school program, the administrators again mis-read the degree of parental satisfaction. Many educators believed that to improve education was to make the courses academically more rigorous. But the blacks wanted a broad education which was meaningful to the black students. For instance, they wanted to learn about the blacks' contribution to the nation's development and the important black men in the history of the United States. Black parents wanted their children to learn a marketable skill. Instead, Jefferson continued in a narrow, subject-oriented approach to curriculum, popular during the 1950's.

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[4]Kenneth A. Erickson, "A Comparison of Parent and Teacher Opinions Concerning School Curriculum and Methods" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, State College of Washington, 1953), p. 64.

Late in 1957 Herbert M. Schwab, speaking for the school board, was quoted in The Oregonian: ". . . in the past few years there has been an increasing awareness of the importance of high school education, particularly as preparation for college and this has erupted into 'what can almost be termed mass hysteria' since the Soviet satelite was launched."[5] The school board translated this concern for academic rigor into action early in the following year.

In January, 1958, Portland school board members initiated plans for a detailed study of the curriculum for students of college potential in Portland high schools. Members of the committee for the Portland High School Curriculum Study believed that they had a mandate to formulate a college preparatory program.[6] Albert R. Kitzhaber, director of the study, reporting the findings in 1959 stated, "The consultants have tried to recommend a curriculum that can be taken with profit by all the students within the category 'college capable' . . . . Students of lesser ability, however, of whom a lower standard of achievement will ordinarily be expected, should be able to benefit to the full extent of their capacity."[7]

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[5]Oregonian, November 26, 1957, p. 1.

[6]Kitzhaber and Castell, Introduction to the Study, pp. 4-5.

[7]Ibid., p. 21.

Again the curriculum was designed primarily for those students who were college-bound. The remaining students, including most of the blacks at Jefferson High School, were expected to glean what they could from this academically-oriented course. In their plans, the official curriculum designers overlooked the "needs of all the students." The academically-oriented curriculum did not gain the interest of many black students and as a result, they dropped out of school.

When Charles L. Jones was principal of Jefferson High School during the 1950's, he enrolled students whose parents and grandparents had attended the school. A former student, himself, of Jefferson, Jones also taught there under the direction of Hopkins Jenkins. The latter's influence is reflected in Jones' statement in 1956:

> Schools are obligated to give their students an appreciation of moral and spiritual values and the finer cultural things of life such as music and art. If you don't do that, then life isn't worth much and right at this particular time they have to get these things or it's just too bad.[8]

Dorothy Flegel, who helped at least two generations of students through Jefferson, built a reputation for her practicality and dedication to the school. Teachers were responsible for pressing each student to work to the utmost of his ability, she believed, since the students were not sufficiently knowledgeable or mature to assume

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[8]Carl Cluff, "Jefferson High Holds to Early Traditions," Oregon Journal, February 29, 1956, p. 1.

responsibility on their own. She agreed with Jones that the students of Jefferson High School should be exposed to social and cultural "niceties" which they may not have had an opportunity to learn at home.[9]

Thus in the authoritarian atmosphere at Jefferson High School, emphasis was placed on white middle-class values. As a result, the black student, who did not subscribe to such values, was alienated from the school.

Whether or not Jones had the changing racial composition of Albina's residents in mind when he voiced his educational philosophy is not clear. There were only approximately 100 Negroes enrolled in Jefferson at the time, but he must have been aware of the extent of black enrollment at Jefferson's feeder schools. Articles about the expanding Negro residential community were appearing frequently in the newspapers. The growing black population, together with the emphasis in national news on civil rights had made most Portlanders "color" conscious.

The high visibility of the blacks and racial prejudice influenced the accuracy of whites in estimating the number of Negroes present. Claire Selltiz cites an extensive study of integrated housing

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[9]Interview with Dorothy Flegel, teacher and vice-principal at Jefferson High School 1923-62, January 14, 1970.

projects in the East to substantiate this hypothesis. There is a definite tendency, she revealed, to over-estimate the number of Negroes in a housing project and to under-estimate the extent of the Negroes' education.[10] Such a tendency was illustrated in Portland when Jefferson was regarded as the "black high school" before there was a 25 per cent Negro enrollment.

A contributing factor to this illusion was the Negro-white housing pattern. A visiting school official on his way to Jefferson learned of the unique situation indirectly from a taxi cab driver. Upon learning his fare's destination, the driver commented that Jefferson was Portland's Negro high school. The school official, knowing that Jefferson had less than 25 per cent blacks, so informed the driver. The driver replied, "That can't be. I have been on Vancouver Avenue when school is getting out and almost all those kids are Negroes." Talking with the Jefferson staff about this conversation, he was surprised to learn that the taxi driver's story was reasonable. Jefferson has two main exits, one to the east and one to the west. When the blacks left school, it was by the east door because that was the most

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[10]Claire Selltiz, et al., Research Methods in Social Relations (revised edition; New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1951), p. 309.

direct route to their homes which were located toward Williams Avenue. White students left by the west door for the same reason.[11]

Jefferson's black enrollment increased from 5 to 7 per cent in the mid-1950's to about 15 per cent by the end of the decade. Statistics on the number of black students who dropped out of school during that period are not available. Teachers who were in Jefferson at the time, however, indicate that, in the first two years of students' high school careers, the loss among black students was high. A study concerning dropouts from Jefferson during the period 1960-64 corroborates the high dropout rate of black students during their freshman and sophomore years.[12] With less national and local attention being directed toward blacks in general and toward black high school students in particular, the dropout rate of black students from 1954 to 1960 could be expected to have been higher than that of the early sixties.

During the mid-1950's, teachers at Jefferson did not find Negro students to be obstreperous or trouble makers. "Docile," "quiet," and "friendly" were words most often used to describe the black student of this period. One teacher commented that he noticed

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[11]Interview with Harold Kleiner, Deputy Superintendent, Portland Schools, October, 1969.

[12]Richard S. Boyd and William H. Thornton, Portland High School Dropouts, Department of Research and Measurements, Portland, Oregon Public Schools (Portland: The Department, 1964).

a difference in attitude between the children whose families had recently migrated to Portland and those whose families were established in the community. The latter, he said, had more respect for Jefferson's traditions and a greater sense of belonging.[13] Changes were taking place during the late 1940's, another said, but one could feel them rather than see them. Still another teacher reflected, "I had only one or two [blacks] in my class and I hardly knew they were there. Of course my classes were 'double E' and advanced work."[14]

The "double E" courses were part of the Educational Enrichment Program designed for the academically gifted 15 per cent of the students. There were some Negroes in these classes. The range of ability among the black students was as broad as among whites. In 1955-56 one Negro was elected to the National Honor Society, in 1956-57, two, 1957-58, three, and in 1959-60, one.[15]

More black males won recognition in school-sponsored competitive sports than in academic achievement. Jeffersonians' pride in their school stemmed as much, if not more, from the school's athletic

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[13]Interview with Hugh McGinnis, teacher and counselor at Jefferson High School since 1953, January 7, 1970.

[14]Interview with Edna Mae Woodward, a teacher at Jefferson High School since 1955, November 21, 1969.

[15]The Spectrum, 1954-60.

victories than it did from academic excellence. Negro students, sharing in this pride, made a substantial contribution to the school's successful athletic program. Every year as the number of blacks in the school increased, the number of Negro boys who reported for varsity sports increased.

The percentage of blacks participating in sports exceeded the percentage of total black enrollment. Football, track, and basketball, in that order, appealed to the blacks. Some seasons the wrestling squad had large turnouts of black students. Baseball was less popular and golf and tennis, considered to be "rich man's sports," did not attract blacks.[16] Athletics are often cited as a factor that held black students in school.

Victories for Jefferson's athletic teams came to be expected as each season's record improved over that of the previous year. In 1958-59, the "Golden Year of Sports" at Jefferson High School, the football team received a national first-place rating among high school football teams. The Jefferson team was acknowledged state football champions. The school also won the city title in basketball and wrestling. Blacks were well-represented on these teams; over 25 per

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[16]Ibid.; Eldridge Cleaver deplores the exploitation of the black athlete. He believes that whites applaud the black only to accentuate the whites' superior position. Soul on Ice (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), pp. 84-96.

cent of the football team and over 50 per cent of the wrestling team were Negroes. Individual recognition went to two blacks, Mel and Ray Renfro, brothers who were selected as members of the All-State Football Team.[17]

Athletic prowess led to individual recognition in the school, but did little to change the racial segregation of most activities. The "J" Club, a lettermen's organization, had some black members. Black students were also members of interest clubs, but only rarely was a black student a member of a social club and then only of the larger clubs. The smaller, more intimate groups remained strictly white.[18]

Black students tended to cluster together as did the white students. One faculty member mentioned that the cafeteria looked like a "checkerboard." He believed that if the students had made an effort to know one another, the racial biases and prejudicial practices would have diminished. To encourage integration, he once asked a group of Negro boys, "Is this Jim Crow land? Why are all the Negroes sitting together?" One black replied, "We are not sitting with Negroes, we are sitting with our friends."[19] The same incident was referred to by a

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[17]The Spectrum, 1959.

[18]The Spectrum, 1954-1960; Interviews with Jefferson teachers and black parents.

[19]Interview with George Guthrie, teacher and vice-principal at Jefferson High School 1958-65, January 14, 1970.

black informant, who interpreted the incident as an invasion of privacy on the part of the "white racist teacher."[20]

Black-white friendships were observed, but were limited in number and restricted almost exclusively to male students. Residence patterns were a factor in limiting such friendships. Since most of the whites lived to the north and west of the school and the blacks lived to the south and east, they were not in close contact outside of school. Where they had interests in common, in school and on the playing fields, friendships developed, but they did not continue into the larger community. Jefferson's teaching staff reported that cross-racial boy-girl friendships did not become noticeable until the middle 1960's.

During the last half of the 1950's when the racial composition of Jefferson was beginning to change, the teachers were a mature, experienced group. In the 1959-60 school year approximately 50 per cent of the teachers had earned a Master's degree. Almost all the others had completed some graduate work since receiving their Bachelor's degrees.[21]

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[20]Interview with a black parent. Almost every black person interviewed stressed his belief that many of Jefferson's teachers were "white racists."

[21]The Spectrum, 1960.

The teacher shortage across the nation affected some of Portland's schools, but rarely was an inexperienced teacher assigned to Jefferson High School. There was only a small turnover in staff during these years. The Teachers' Directory shows that most of the teachers who ended their careers at Jefferson had been there for many years and left to retire. Several of the male teachers who joined the faculty after the war left Jefferson in the 1950's to become administrators at other schools. Male replacements of all vacancies on the staff were numerous, thereby lessening the majority position of females on the teaching staff.

Replacements for departing faculty members were white in all instances except one. A limited number of black teachers worked in the Portland school system, but all of them in elementary schools containing a high percentage of black students. The first two black teachers in the system were hired in 1945. An increase in employment of blacks occurred after the Vanport flood of 1948 when black teachers from the Vanport schools were given an opportunity to teach in Portland. They were appointed to schools which had large Negro enrollments. When a black secondary teacher was hired in 1956, she was assigned to teach at Jefferson. Jefferson High School had a growing black population, therefore critics charged, ". . . a token black was

hired."[22] Credence is lent to their charge in that it was not until 1963 that another black teacher came to Jefferson. When school officials were criticized for not hiring more black teachers, they said that none who qualified had applied. The officials stated that they simply wanted teachers most qualified for the jobs, they did not discriminate because of color.

Within the schools, black students were to be treated the same as white students. Persons who were teaching at Jefferson during this period unanimously reported that their attempts at racial objectivity had developed into an unofficial policy of "color-blindness." "I saw the students as neither black nor white; I tried to treat them all the same." Such comments were repeated in almost all interviews. The attitude represents an approach considered at that time to be democratic. To give special attention to a Negro child was interpreted as indicative of the inferiority of the Negro child. A Jefferson faculty member revealed the policy as a facade by relating the following incident: The school staff was making arrangements for a pregnant girl to drop out of school. One of the teachers lamented, ". . . and she is one of ours too." The pregnant girl was white.[23] In many

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[22]Interview with Nathan Nickerson, Portland Urban League, January 7, 1970.

[23]Interview with William See, a teacher at Jefferson High School since 1954, October 5, 1969.

instances the "color-blindness" probably existed only on the surface.

The approach has been disparagingly compared by critics with the practice, common in some circles, of totally ignoring the presence of a Negro waiter or maid and talking about "coons and niggers." Reflecting upon this period when attempts were made to ignore color, they condemn the policy as idiotic.[24] "We are black--recognize us as individuals."

The "color-blind" concept was not successful because it was artificial and denied the individuality of the child. Blacks reasoned that if the teacher did not see them as black boys and girls, perhaps she did not see them at all. If the teacher did not see and recognize them as individuals, as human beings, they asked, "Why bother to remain in school?" In the 1950's the blacks were seeking equality. They did not want to be "invisible."[25]

Despite its lack of success, many teachers at Jefferson attest to the sincerity of the "color-blind" approach. These teachers were trained to function in a white middle-class school, and Jefferson was

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[24]Interview with Nathan Nickerson, Portland Urban League, January 7, 1970.

[25]Some whites do not "see" Negroes. Ralph Ellison, in the prologue to Invisible Man, Modern Library (New York: Random House, 1947), attributes this circumstance to the construction of the white's inner eye.

in the process of becoming a racially mixed school. The problems and complaints of the Negro community were alien to the white staff.

Much of the criticism and concern on the part of black parents did not reach school authorities. To many of the blacks, the school teachers and the principal represented remote figures of authority whom they were reluctant to approach. In many instances when school officials asked black parents to discuss a problem involving their child, the visit would prove entirely unsatisfactory both to the school officials and to the parents. Black parents often did not understand what a teacher was trying to convey. In ignorance, they would nod in agreement. The teacher would become frustrated because he either was well aware that the parents did not understand him or because their responses were not what he had expected. Black critics of the school, when discussing the failure of the teachers to communicate successfully with black students and parents, attribute the failure to the teachers' "racist attitudes."

The racial factor in the social conditions at Jefferson High School was a major grievance of black parents. They were disturbed because their children were included in so few of the social clubs. The clubs were sponsored by the school and, as such, they believed should be considered a part of the school program. Black parents contended that no child should be deprived, solely on the basis of

race, of any phase of educational or cultural experience which the school provided.[26] Although Negro parents were concerned about the lack of social acceptance of their children, most of them were unable to convey to the school officials the depth of their grievances. Social segregation widened the gap between the black community and the school.

A few blacks did have contact with school officials. Two or three Negroes were members of the Dads' Club and one or two Negro mothers belonged to the Parents and Teachers Association.[27] Those blacks who had occasion to talk with school officials communicated the concern of the black community about the social aspects of Jefferson's curriculum. These blacks report that the school's leaders claimed that they were conducting a democratic school, and that under a democratic system, each student has the right to choose his own friends. They believed the administration could not interfere.[28]

The individual efforts of black parents to initiate changes at Jefferson High School during the 1950's were fruitless. In the latter

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[26]Interview with E. Simpson Hill, Executive Secretary, Portland Urban League, October 15, 1969.

[27]The Spectrum, 1954-60.

[28]Interview with E. Simpson Hill, October 15, 1969.

years of the decade some Negroes grouped together to present their grievances. In the following decade, blacks in Albina followed the national example and organized. Ad hoc committees of Negroes, composed of the articulate members of the community, confronted members of the school board and administrators at Jefferson High School.

CHAPTER VII

ENVIRONMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The decade of the 1960's initiated change for the black students at Jefferson High School as well as for all black Americans. The changes at Jefferson among both students and teachers are influenced primarily by the socio-economic conditions of black families in the Albina area. A review of recent sociological studies which are applicable to Albina will aid in understanding the black student's problems and the problems confronting the teachers at Jefferson.

White middle-class teachers are likely to have a stereotyped image of the Negro. Neither this stereotyped image nor the "color-blind" approach attempted at Jefferson in the 1950's contributes to the teachers' understanding of the problems of the impoverished blacks. Poor families, per se, had not been unknown at Jefferson. For years many needy boys and girls had successfully graduated from that school. But they were white boys and girls, and the newcomers at Jefferson are black.

In addition to different skin color, the blacks introduce a conflict of values. Whereas, in the past, most blacks had generally accepted white middle-class values, in the 1960's these values are

foreign to some blacks. Their life-style does not include long-range objectives with deferred gratification. These black parents do not instill into their children values such as punctuality, a subdued voice, and automatic respect for authority.[1] As a consequence, when the children go to school, their white middle-class teachers are unable to understand their conduct.

Race, socio-economic level, and different value systems complicate the task of educating the inner-city youth. Sociologists have conducted numerous studies investigating social-class status and education. These studies point out that children of low-income families usually do not perform as well in school as children of families with a relatively high income level.[2]

The disadvantaged youths in Jefferson's attendance area are the blacks, and some whites, living in Albina. Blacks living in that

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[1]Many blacks still retain a fatalistic philosophy; they believed that their own efforts are of little consequence and that chance plays an important role. See my page 69.

[2]August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949); Robert J. Havighurst, et al, Growing Up In River City (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962). These are exhaustive studies of social class in white communities. Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., Youth in the Ghetto (New York: HARYOU, Inc., 1964). Excellent study of the blacks of Harlem; Patricia Cayo Sexton flatly states in Education and Income (New York: The Viking Press, 1961) that the quality of education a child receives is directly related to the level of the family income.

area have the same stigma attached to them, suffer similar degradation to blacks living in Harlem in New York, or The Huff in Cleveland. Albina does not resemble the slum sections of the large eastern cities with their dark grimy tenements. Rather it is, on a smaller scale, a slum similar to Watts in Los Angeles. Not all sections of Albina can be classified as slum. There are well-kept modest homes along many of the tree-lined streets. The earlier settled southern section, however, contains many old dilapidated buildings well beyond their usability for human habitation, but still occupied by black families.

In 1957 the City Planning Commission estimated that 4,400 of the 5,000 houses in the Williams Avenue area were built before World War I. The commission further stated that over 60 per cent of the housing in the Broadway-Steel Bridge area, one of high black concentration, is substandard. It is not uncommon, according to the report, to find an entire black family living in a single substandard room.[3] Negroes live in such conditions because they are restricted to Albina and because they cannot afford to rent better accommodations.

Holding only menial jobs, the blacks have low incomes. In 1960 the median income for the black family in Albina was $4,518

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[3]City Club of Portland, "The Negro in Portland: A Progress Report 1945-1957," Portland City Club Bulletin (Portland: City Club of Portland, 1957), p. 358.

compared to $6,333 for Portland as a whole.[4] Blacks in service work accounted for 28 per cent of their adult male labor force. Another 16 per cent were laborers, but only 2 per cent held "white collar" sales jobs.[5] Some blacks' inability to find work was also a problem. In 1960, 13 per cent of the black labor force was unemployed compared to approximately 5 per cent in all of Portland.[6] Many, but not all, blacks lacked the training and education necessary to secure better jobs.

The educational level of the blacks also lagged behind that of most Portlanders. About 5 per cent of the black adults had never attended school and 29 per cent had not finished elementary school. On the other hand, 6 per cent of the black adults had completed college, whereas 7 per cent of the total population of the city had been graduated from college.[7]

Statistics concerning the economic condition of the blacks in Albina are augmented by interviews reported by the Subcommittee on Community and Home Environment of the Committee on Race and Education. This subcommittee met periodically from October, 1963, to May,

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[4]Race and Equal Educational Opportunity in Portland's Schools, p. 47.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

1964. Committee members interviewed numerous people who were not only knowledgable about conditions in Albina from personal experience, but were also interested in improving the lot of the inhabitants. Social workers, ministers, visiting nurses, policemen, interested laymen, and blacks who lived in Albina all were invited to contribute information. The data were not quantified, but testimony gathered at the meetings was summarized, revealing a familiar pattern. The witnesses described:

1. Homes with only a mother present, where "fathers" change frequently.

2. Homes where drunkenness is common.

3. Homes where the mother works and is absent a large part of the day. Children, left to fend for themselves, resort to the streets.

4. Homes where adults habitually use coarse and profane language. Children bring that vocabulary to school where its use prevents rapport with the middle-class teacher.

5. Homes where parental motivation is low. Parents can see little need for an education because of their own lack of success in a discriminatory society. Some parents resent the younger generation becoming more educated than their elders and "putting on airs." Often parents are not hostile toward education, but at the same time they do not encourage their children to do well in school.

6. Homes in which the most rudimentary amenities are lacking. Poorly heated and ill-furnished, the rooms are crowded and privacy is absent. Bathroom facilities, frequently shared with other families, are often faulty.

7. Homes where there is not enough food to eat or milk to drink. Evidence of undernourishment is seen in some children.

8. Homes where children lack adequate clothing. They need shoes and underwear. The latter is a source of embarrassment for children when changing for physical education classes.

9. Homes where a sense of family is lacking. In extreme cases the child is not certain of his parents' identity. The male adult is subordinate to the female adult in the household.[8]

These conditions, as previously mentioned, are not found in all of Albina's homes or are they restricted solely to the blacks. Many of the black families are, in fact, described as having an exceptionally warm and close relationship between children and adults. Although their income is not great, these parents provide for their children and encourage them in their endeavors.

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[8]Minutes of the meetings, Committee on Race and Education, Subcommittee on Community and Home Environment. October, 1963-May, 1964, pp. 1-47; Race and Equal Educational Opportunity in Portland's Schools, pp. 50-51.

Deplorable conditions similar to those found in Albina prompted Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Assistant Secretary of Labor, to prepare his controversial report, The Negro Family: The Case For National Action. The report received national attention when President Johnson used it as the basis for his speech on June 4, 1965, at Howard University. Essentially, Moynihan claims that the deterioration of the Negro family is at the heart of the Negro problem. He contends that adult conduct is learned when children are young in the family which is the primary socializing unit.[9] Black families fail to pass on to their children the mores of the larger society.

As if to forestall his critics, Moynihan hastens to add that not all Negro families are in this disintegrated condition. Because the middle-class Negroes raise statistical averages for the Negro group as a whole, they in effect conceal the extent of disorganization of the Negro family. Moynihan notes that E. Franklin Frazier, Negro sociologist, cites the middle-class Negro family as a stable, effective unit living in accordance with the traditional patterns of our society. Frazier believes that these families are even more patriarchal and protective of their children than the average middle-class white family.[10]

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[9]U. S. Department of Labor, The Negro Family: The Case For National Action (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 5.

[10]Ibid., p. 6.

But in far more cases, Moynihan argues, Negro families have been forced into female-dominated units which are basically out of step with the larger society. The process is self-perpetuating over the generations. Girls have a model to emulate; boys have none. Any special attention in the family is directed to the girls since they are considered the important members, as illustrated by the fact that until 1963, more Negro girls than boys completed high school and continued on to college.[11]

The lack of a male model is said to have a detrimental effect on the Negro boy. White boys without fathers are around white male neighbors and relatives who are following a pattern of work; the Negro boy is not.[12] The poor performance of Negro boys in school is continued on the job. Since seldom is the male the sole support of his family, he plays a subservient role in the household. Thus the cycle continues.

Moynihan agrees with Frazier that the move to the city has contributed to the dissolution of blacks' family life. The city atmosphere lacks the rural community opinion which helped to regulate their lives in the smaller communities.[13] Implying that the plight of

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[11] Ibid., p. 29.

[12] Ibid., p. 31.

[13] Ibid., p. 18.

the blacks is similar to a disease, Moynihan declares that for the Negro to escape from this "tangle of pathology," the "cycle of failure" must be broken.

The report is probably as well-known for the criticism it received as for its content. Social scientists, politicians, and Negro civil rights leaders, for reasons of their own condemn it. Regardless of the validity of some of their criticisms, the report is useful for its insight into Negro life style.

Moynihan drew on the 1960 census and Bureau of Labor statistics, the HARYOU reports, and his personal experience in the ghettos of New York's East Side. Albina does not resemble that ghetto in a material way, but nevertheless Albina is a ghetto. The Negro psychologist, Kenneth B. Clark, refers to the "invisible wall" that shuts the blacks in the ghetto just as securely as the walls enclosed the Jews in sixteenth century Venice.[14] Psychologically, the blacks in Albina are as cut off from the larger society as are the blacks in Harlem.

Within the ghetto, Clark states, the female occupies the dominant role. This practice is a carryover from the days of slavery when the principal source of family continuity was through the woman.

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[14]Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 11.

In post-slavery days the Negro male continued to be relegated to a menial subservient position.[15] Unable to become the sole support of his family, he was also denied the dominant role.

Negro children learn early in life that the "father" is worthy of little respect. Very shortly thereafter the child learns that society respects no one who is black. Black is inferior, children have learned. Clark writes that by the age of seven, they accept the dark skin, ". . . but the stigma remains; they have been forced to recognize themselves as inferior. Few, if any Negroes ever fully lose that sense of shame and self-hatred."[16] His lack of self-respect and feeling of interiority causes the child to generate a poor self-image. His belief about the inferiority of the black and consequently his own inferiority is reinforced by the squalid environment in which he lives. Each failure he has further justifies his low self-concept.[17]

Some blacks' problems are further complicated by their reluctance to identify with other blacks. Because they resist identification with blacks and are rejected by the whites, these Negro youth are prone to develop feelings of alienation. Sapped of self-confidence,

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[15] Ibid., p. 70.

[16] Ibid., p. 65.

[17] Ibid.

isolated from fellow human beings, is it any wonder that many black children have problems when attending school?

Educational problems stemming from such a background are numerous. Martin Deutsch, a psychiatrist and Director of the New York Medical College Institute of Developmental Studies, believes that the lower-class child enters the school situation so poorly prepared that failure is inevitable. Because his home lacks material objects, the child suffers from "stimulus deprivation." He cannot develop his ability to organize and discriminate perceptually slight differences in the environment.[18] His is not like a middle-class home, a verbally-oriented environment. He hears limited conversation within the family and has little opportunity to participate. When the child arrives in school he lacks the ability to express his thoughts to the teacher or to understand her instructions.

Basil Bernstein, an English sociologist, attributes the inability of the child to communicate and understand the teacher to the "public" language which is common to the lower-class.[19] The

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[18]Martin Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process," Education in Depressed Areas, ed. by A. Harry Passow (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963), pp. 170-71.

[19]Basil Bernstein, "Social Class and Linguistic Development: A Theory of Social Learning," in Education, Economy and Society, ed. by A. H. Halsey, et al. (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), p. 292.

lower-class uses an informal language to convey concrete needs and immediate consequences, he believes, while the middle-class tends to use a more formal language to emphasize the relating of concepts. In lower-class homes, the child is used to short, grammatically simple, often unfinished, sentences. Rigid and limited use of adjectives and adverbs restricts the conversation.[20] These children function well in their own milieu, but fail to learn to communicate ideas and relationships requiring more precise formulation.

Stephen S. and Joan C. Baratz, social science researchers, believe that the Negro child in the ghetto has the ability to communicate. The problems arise, they believe, because the middle-class teachers cannot understand the Negro dialect. They criticize school officials for labeling as "bad" the blacks' non-standard English. Non-standard English is a part of the blacks' culture and identity and to condemn it, the authors believe, is as foolish as condemning any other foreign language.[21] The black child is caught in a dilemma; if he rejects the dialect of the ghetto, he rejects his home, family, and peers; if he rejects the standard English, he fails in school. Failure in school is perhaps the more often chosen course of action.

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[20] Ibid., p. 298.

[21] Stephen S. Baratz and Joan C. Baratz, "Negro Ghetto Children and Urban Education: A Cultural Solution," Social Education, 33 (April, 1964), p. 402.

Carl Bereiter, an educator, does not call the speech of deprived children a dialect, but points out that their language differs significantly from that used by middle-class children. Lower-class children tend to run the words of a sentence together to make it sound like a single word. The whole sentence, he claims, functions like a "giant word," and children are unable to take the sentence apart and re-combine the words.[22] Their speech has a gutteral sound and once the listener has become accustomed to this style of speech, he may believe that he hears the intervening words. In reality, the child does not use such words as "it," "if," and "in," but substitutes "ih" for these words.[23] Since the child does not use individual words to build a sentence, he is unable to understand the meaning of individual words in a sentence. These children can render the appropriate over-all sound profile of a short sentence. They cannot, however, detect the different meanings that words such as "and," "a," and "or" cause in a sentence. With such a linguistic barrier, the lower-class-Negro child is handicapped in school.

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[22]Carl Bereiter and Siegfried Engleman, Teaching Disadvantaged Children in Pre-School (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 34.

[23]Ibid., p. 35.

The lower-class black also lacks orientation to the system of rewards for accomplished tasks, a system important in schools.[24] The Negro child lacks a "future" orientation because the home fails to create future expectations for present performance.[25] In their impoverished homes, perhaps with a working mother, little time is available to assign a task, observe the performance, and then reward its successful completion. Tasks assigned in a lower-class home tend to be physical, to require a short attention span, and to relate to concrete objects or services for people. Middle-class assignments are likely to require discussion and to provide an opportunity for the child to relate, describe, and interpret the task.

Miriam L. Goldberg, educational researcher, reports that researchers have consistently found discrepancies between the attention spans of middle-class and disadvantaged children.[26] Frank Riessman, a psychologist, points out that although a deprived child is reluctant to become involved in a task, once he becomes interested, he

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[24]Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process," p. 172.

[25]Miriam L. Goldberg, "Factors Affecting Educational Attainment in Depressed Urban Areas," in Education in Depressed Areas, ed. by A. Harry Passow (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963), p. 86.

[26]Ibid., p. 79.

is often able to work tenaciously for a long period of time.[27] Most secondary teachers find that the short attention span of lower-class children limits the traditional use of the 40 or 50 minute class period.

The difficulties the black child encounters in the first years of school are accumulative, according to Deutsch. By the time the child reaches the fifth grade, he claims, the gap that existed in the first grade between the lower-class and the middle-class child has broadened significantly.[28] When some of the black children reach Jefferson High School, they are four or five years behind in reading ability.

Helen H. Davidson, an educator, in her investigations of the characteristics of the poor-achiever, finds him burdened with anxiety, fearful of the world and of figures of authority, and lacking in self-confidence. He lacks self-control and often acts impulsively.[29] As a defense against his feelings of inadequacy, he will talk loudly and put up a "false front."

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[27]Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 67.

[28]Martin Deutsch, Minority Group and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement (Ithica, New York: Society for Applied Anthropology, 1960).

Many black students attending Jefferson in the 1960's displayed rough manners, profane vocabularies, short attention spans, and little confidence in their ability to excell. They hid their embarrassment over the clothes they had to wear with bravado. These characteristics and the aggressive and belligerent conduct that the student had learned in his home and on the streets, combined to produce a difficult teaching situation to the faculty. Many white middle-class teachers at Jefferson High School were unable to cope with the situation. Until the middle 1960's, none of them had had any special training in working with disadvantaged youth.

Gertrude Downing finds that special training does not adequately prepare all teachers to work with disadvantaged students. She finds that a good teacher for a school in a disadvantaged area must be emotionally mature and physically strong. The teacher must be enthusiastic and interested in her subject, but able to vary and individualize her techniques of teaching. She must be capable of considerable objectivity in classroom work.[30] These are qualities which any good teacher should possess, but it is imperative that teachers of disadvantaged children have such qualities.

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[30]Gertrude L. Downing, The Preparation of Teachers for Schools in Culturally Deprived Neighborhoods (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Office of Education, 1965), p. 30.

Beyond these attributes described in Downing's study, observers at Jefferson High School indicate several other vital characteristics. A sense of humor, the ability to laugh at oneself, a respect for the other person simply because he is a human being, and unending patience are just a few of the additional qualities that successful teachers at Jefferson displayed.

Far too few teachers in depressed areas had these characteristics during the early 1960's. White middle-class teachers reflect their own backgrounds and values. Riessman has clearly shown that teachers perceive and treat lower-class children differently from children of higher-status homes.[31] Further, he claims the teacher's middle-class orientation, without any conscious effort on the part of school personnel, provides automatically for discrimination against children from depressed areas.

A portion of Jefferson's attendance area became depressed as the composition of Albina's population changed. The school's curriculum and teaching methods, which were oriented to white middle-class standards, did not change. The significance of the effect of the environment on lower-class Negroes was not fully appreciated until the

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[31]Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, p. 19.

1960's. Therefore, as the number of blacks increased at Jefferson High School, the complexity and intensity of the school's problems increased.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SIXTIES: A DECADE OF CHANGE

When the decade of the 1960's opened, changes had already occurred in Albina. The 1960 census confirmed what many Portlanders already knew: Albina was fast becoming a black community. Census data represent conditions at a moment in time, but the shift of population in Albina indicated by census figures continued unabated into the middle 1960's.

During this decade, the activities centering about Jefferson High School fall into three categories: the efforts on the part of various committees to initiate change, the efforts of the school to identify and ease the problems, and the relationship between the activities of the student body and the larger community. Generally speaking, the response of the larger community to the problems at Jefferson was to suppress the violence and unrest but to ignore the underlying causes. The rapid change in racial composition contributed to the strained and tense atmosphere within the school.

The impetus that forced many blacks to move north toward Jefferson occurred in the late 1950's. Highway projects cut through the black community, and construction of the Exhibition and Recreation

Center caused many of their homes to be demolished. Built on a site near the Broadway and Steel Bridge on the east bank of the Willamette, the E-R Center later named the Memorial Coliseum, eliminated many old and dilapidated buildings which had, according to E. Simpson Hill, housed 360 family units.[1] Hill claims that about 10 per cent of these black families moved east a few blocks and the rest moved north.

Another project which began in the early 1960's and was under construction for several years was Emanuel Hospital. When the existing hospital developed a need to expand, hospital officials purchased several blocks of buildings that were eventually demolished and replaced with hospital facilities. But for the most part, Albina itself failed to prosper as there was little new construction except for those projects which were primarily government-sponsored.[2]

Some of the government construction also displaced whites in Albina. The interstate highway which crosses the Willamette River in southern Albina, follows the river northwest a short distance, then turns north and cuts through the white section of Jefferson's attendance

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[1]League of Women Voters of Portland, "An Examination of the Attitudes, Policies and Procedures Which Affect the Application of the Oregon 1959 Fair Housing Law" (Portland: League of Women Voters of Portland, 1962), p. 21.

[2]City Planning Commission, "Central Albina Study," Portland, Oregon, 1962, p. 4.

area. When the highway was built, almost all families living in the western section were white. As they were displaced, many of them did not re-locate near Jefferson but moved to the suburbs. Therefore, while the number of blacks in Albina was increasing, the number of whites was decreasing. (See Table 5.)

The outflow of whites frequently left houses and apartments vacant. Such readily available accommodations tended to encourage transient tenants. For instance, in the early 1960's, Portlanders considered the Highland neighborhood a transient area because of the availability of housing.[3] The housing units, however, were so shabby and in such poor repair that tenants moved as soon as they were able to find better living quarters. The high mobility rate in the Highland district contributed to the instability of that community.

Mobility of black families increased the number of black students at Jefferson because when a family moved it was almost always to the Jefferson attendance area. Of those blacks who were graduated from Jefferson between 1961-65, over 80 per cent attended Jefferson for

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[3]League of Women Voters of Portland, "Examination of the Oregon 1959 Fair Housing Law," p. 21.

TABLE 5

NEGRO ENROLLMENT AT JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

Year	Total Enrollment	Number Negroes	Percent Negroes
1950*	2,138	--	4
1955*	2,254	--	7
1960*	2,052	--	18
1963-64	2,315	597	26
1964-65	2,220	619	28
1965-66	1,983	626	32
1966-67	1,910	670	35
1967-68	1,792	671	37
1968-69	1,619	666	41
1969-70	1,259	546	43

*These percentages are estimates.

(Source: Administrative Research Department, Portland Public Schools.)

their four years of high school. Only 8 per cent transferred to Jefferson from other high schools in the city during their high school careers.[4]

At Jefferson the greatest influx of black students occurred in the late 1950's and early 1960's. During the middle and later part of the 1960's, the number of black elementary school children increased 13 per cent. Harold Kleiner, assistant superintendent and director of the Model Schools Program, reported in August, 1968, that the number of Negro elementary students increased from 4,234 in 1965 to 4,778 in 1968, while the white student population remained static. But, he added, during the same period, in those schools in Albina with a high percentage of black enrollment, the whites' enrollment decreased by 467 students.[5]

A decrease in Jefferson's enrollment from 1963 to 1969 was also largely accountable for the increased percentage of blacks. As Table 5 shows, the total enrollment decreased 700 students while the number of blacks increased.

As the number of blacks at Jefferson High School increased, their activities, needs, and desires gradually drew increased attention.

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[4]R. William Clark, "A Study of Selected Academic and Non-Academic Characteristics of the Negro Graduates of a Portland, Oregon, Secondary School" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Portland, 1967), p. 94.

[5]Oregonian, August 27, 1968, p. 17.

Black parents made school officials aware of their concern for the treatment that their children were receiving at Jefferson. Black youths began to coalesce and to act in certain instances as a group rather than as individuals.

Throughout the decade, attempts were made to avoid isolating the blacks in Jefferson and creating a "black high school." In 1964-65 the school board authorized transfer of black students to other high schools in the city if space was available. The practice was continued even though it was criticized. Whites claimed that the policy showed partiality to the blacks. Blacks, on the other hand, complained that the transfer policy took some of the more academically strong black students from Jefferson, thereby weakening the remaining group.

A boundary change in 1965 moved Jefferson's southern boundary from Russell Street several blocks north to Fremount Street. Ostensibly school administrators were adjusting the boundary to relieve Jefferson of its high enrollment and to increase enrollment at Washington and Grant High Schools where space was available. The total number of students enrolled at Jefferson had been declining and continued to do so.

Although the total number of blacks did not rise significantly, the role of the black at Jefferson did change. Beginning in the late 1950's, some blacks began to demonstrate that they were no longer, as

earlier described, "docile and friendly." As one teacher remarked, "You could not see it [the change] but you could feel it."[6] Civil rights activities in the South caused Jefferson students to become conscious of their own rights. Whereas in the past the black students had grouped together for companionship, in the early 1960's they began grouping together for "political" strength. During the formative period, however, the group had no single leader. Throughout the decade, the black student groups were splintered. Class structure, varying degrees of academic ability, and different interests precluded a solidification of blacks. The black students presented a fairly solid front on particular issues such as racial discrimination; but, like their parents, they were divided on issues such as vocational training versus academic education.

The social aspects of school life continued to be important during the early 1960's. Blacks were indignant when they were denied entree to the social clubs. A small committee of black parents met with Jefferson's officials in 1962 to urge that a more democratic system

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[6]Interview with Hugh McGinnis, teacher and counselor at Jefferson High School since 1953.

to govern school clubs be adopted.[7] The blacks argued, as they had before, that the social clubs were a part of the school program, and, as such, should be open to all students or be abolished. School leaders indicated that they believed some progress had been made in integrating the clubs which they saw as traditionally a part of the students' domain rather than of the official curriculum. That race and prejudice were underlying factors in the clubs' operations is shown by the remark of one school leader: "But these clubs meet in white homes."[8]

Some of the interest clubs attracted Negro girls, but in one instance, the Tri-Y Club, the membership became all black, participation lagged, and the club ceased to exist.[9] Black students with talent and values similar to those of the white students, were most often invited to join clubs.

When William Knouff became principal at Jefferson in 1965, he altered the bid system used by the social clubs. By that time, however,

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[7]In 1958 the student body of the just completed Wilson High School agreed to shun the bid or invitation to club membership. The students listed their preference and the clubs were filled from these lists. Oregonian, November 30, 1958, p. 45.

[8]Interview with Nathan Nickerson, Portland Urban League, January 7, 1970.

[9]Interview with Edna Mae Woodward, teacher and counselor at Jefferson High School since 1955, November 21, 1969.

school clubs had lost their importance to the blacks. They had greater issues at stake.

During the early years of the 1960's, Negro high school boys did not depend upon clubs to the same extent as had girls for school participation. Rather they used athletics as a means of winning individual recognition. Their participation was enthusiastic. Over 50 per cent of the black male students who graduated in the years 1961 through 1965 won an athletic letter.[10] Black critics now charge that black athletes could have made an even more impressive record. They claim that blacks were made to compete with other blacks for positions on the teams, while white students of lesser ability won positions without such competition.[11]

An informant close to the coaching staff at Jefferson High School denies that race influenced the selecting of players. "Coaches were as proud of the black players as they were the white. Furthermore, you can't build winning teams that way--and Jeff had winning teams."[12]

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[10]Clark, "A Study of Selected Academic and Non-Academic Characteristics of the Negro Graduates of a Portland, Oregon, Secondary School," p. 99.

[11]Interview with Nathan Nickerson, January 7, 1970.

[12]Informant who was at Jefferson High School.

During the latter part of the decade, according to one staff member, the blacks' interest in athletics diminished somewhat. Many boys, albeit with great potential, did not care to participate. Just as the social clubs became less important to the girls, athletics for black males became less significant. The issues of civil rights, the changing of Jefferson's curriculum, and "Black Power" were the events in which blacks were becoming involved. At Jefferson High School the issues were recognized earlier than in other sections of the school system. Although the problems were too numerous and complex to solve on a local level, steps were taken to at least identify them and to make the teachers and students aware of them. The same problems had existed at Jefferson in the 1950's, but were not as obvious because the blacks were fewer in number.

In 1962 a steering committee of interested Jefferson teachers was formed to identify problem areas in the curriculum and to suggest solutions. All teachers were asked to complete an inquiry form for each student in their classes whom they regarded as having motivation, health, learning, or behavior problems of a serious nature.[13] The Research Department of the district made a comprehensive analysis of

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[13]Department of Research and Measurement, "A Survey of Student Problems as Seen by a High School Faculty," Portland Public Schools, 1962, p. 2.

the data furnished by the teachers. The analysis was intended to stimulate staff reaction to the problems reported.

Skill deficiencies were reported more frequently among boys than among girls. Noting that these deficiencies were usually reported by only one of a student's several teachers, an analyst chided, "Why should only one teacher report a skill deficiency such as written expression or spelling?"[14] This analyst also noted that problems of motivation were usually observed by only one of a student's several teachers. He inferred that the students were not known very well by their teachers. The steering committee utilized the collected data and its analysis to initiate what became known as the Jefferson Project.

The objective of the Jefferson Project was ". . . to correct deficiencies in the curriculum, in teacher attitude and understanding, and to remake portions of the school function to accommodate the new variety of student population."[15] With this commendable objective, the Jefferson Project Committee initiated several ambitious and constructive programs: developmental reading, social work, special counseling, adult literacy education, professional meetings (for teachers), service club cooperation, cultural enrichment, and curriculum study.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Harold Hansen, "The Jefferson Project, 1964-65," Portland, Oregon, n.d., p. 3.

The reading program got underway in 1962-63 with special attention concentrated upon the freshman class. A reading specialist worked with individual students and with the teachers of that class. In the following year, emphasis was placed upon building up the individual student's self-concept in that a low self-concept was considered to be at the root of the reading difficulty. In 1964-65 when sufficient help was not available to continue the bolstering-of-self-concept approach, the reading consultant worked with small classes and with individuals as in 1962-63.[16] A communications center, appealing to the college-bound student as well as aiding the poor reader, was developed later in 1966.

Several interested teachers at Jefferson recognized socio-economic ills as the source of many of the school's problems. Jefferson already had two half-time social workers, more than any other city high school. Through the efforts of the Jefferson Project, volunteers came from the Graduate School of Social Work at Portland State College to work for two days a week. By the end of the decade, school district officials had recognized the need for an increase in social service. They introduced the services of a "community agent"

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[16] Ibid., p. 5.

to visit the homes of students who obviously needed help or who were causing disturbances in school.

Special counseling was encouraged for black students deemed to be potential drop-outs and for those who obviously possessed ability but were not achieving success in their academic work. The concern was to keep the blacks in school and specifically to aid those who were academically capable of attending college.

A class to combat adult illiteracy was initiated as part of the Jefferson Project in 1963. The program had a two-fold purpose: to help the functional illiterate to learn to read, and, of more direct benefit to Jefferson, to entice lower-class adults into the school. By this means, these adults would become acquainted with school personnel and, the project director believed, therefore take a greater interest in their children's education.

To increase the teachers' awareness of the diversity of home backgrounds from which Jefferson drew its students, the project directors scheduled orientation discussions, and, prior to the school year, conducted tours through the attendance area. Most of the teachers at Jefferson did not live in Albina but commuted to work from their homes in more affluent sections of the city. To make the teachers aware of the students' problems, the director organized professional meetings devoted to discussing their problems. His objective was not

only to assist the teachers, but also to obtain their support for the project.

The social aspects of Jefferson High School's activities came under attack by the black community during the early 1960's. To engage more blacks in Jefferson's service clubs and at the same time bring the community closer to the school, the Jefferson Project urged students to join clubs. Boys' and girls' clubs were encouraged to provide cultural enrichment programs for students in the neighborhood elementary schools. In 1963-64 the program included classes in swimming, reading, music, and art, as well as opportunities for companionship. By 1965, however, the program declined from lack of adult supervision.

The Jefferson Project, with sterling objectives and sincere dedication on the part of some of Jefferson's personnel, did not achieve its goals. Teachers active in the venture believe that they accomplished some good, but blame lack of interest, both in terms of money and personal participation by educators, for the general lack of success.[17] The Jefferson Project was a self-help attempt by one school to search for a solution to a community problem. The overall

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[17]Interviews with teachers involved in the project.

problem of educating the disadvantaged was under study in Portland concurrent with the middle years of the Jefferson Project.

During the fall of 1963, a citizens' committee began investigating the issues of race and equal opportunity in Portland's schools. The growing concern in large cities across the country regarding the education of the disadvantaged, in addition to the rising protest from articulate members of Portland's black community, prompted the board members to act. The Committee on Racial Imbalance in the Public Schools, with a membership of over 100 citizens representing a broad spectrum of the community, met with the school board in May, 1963.[18] The committee strongly urged that a method be sought to prevent the concentration of blacks in certain of the city's schools. Board members were convinced of the seriousness of the problem. A resolution of the Board of Education, Multnomah County School District No. 1, in July, 1963, created a Committee on Race and Education.[19] Because of the high social status of many of the committee members, the allocation of money to finance the study, and the interest and willingness to

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[18]Committee on Race and Education, Race and Equal Educational Opportunity in Portland's Public Schools, p. 9; Oregonian, August 13, 1963, p. 1.

[19]Oregonian, August 13, 1963, p. 1; Committee on Race and Education, Race and Equal Educational Opportunity in Portland's Public Schools, Herbert M. Schwab, Chairman (Portland: School District No. 1, 1964), p. 221.

work of the majority of the members, the report of the committee was a productive document. The school board had asked for answers to the following:

1. Does the Portland school district, to any extent, deprive the children of one race of education opportunities equal to those of other races? If so, what corrective steps should be taken?

2. What might be done to improve achievement of students in culturally deprived areas of the city in meeting the educational objectives of this school system?

3. What might the school system do through its educational processes to eliminate unreasoned prejudice in the minds of children of one race against persons of another race?[20]

After considering the questions, the committee realized that the problems extended beyond the school itself. Schools alone, they said, could not break down residential restrictions, guarantee jobs, eliminate prejudice, abolish poverty, or conquer apathy and delinquency. Therefore, the committee broadened the study to include the larger social context within which the educational problems occurred.[21]

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[20]Committee on Race and Education, Race and Equal Educational Opportunity in Portland's Schools, p. 3.

[21]Ibid.

In the fall of 1964, the chairman of the committee delivered to the school board a report of findings and a list of recommendations; the major one of which, i.e., establishment of a Model School program, would influence Jefferson High School several years later. Of more immediate influence was the recommendation to re-evaluate the adequacy of the high school curriculum in light of the educational problems that existed in Albina. The committee recommended the establishment of occupation-oriented programs of general education for those students who were not college-bound.

The committee also recommended that a re-evaluation of the special-achievement program be made by a qualified independent group. This recommendation was important to Jefferson because in 1963-64, 7 per cent of Jefferson's enrollment was classified as mentally retarded (MR). Of the 162 students in the MR class, 122 were Negro. In addition, 21 other black students classified as MR had been transferred to other schools. Portland's schools had designated 212 of the city's 1,181 black high school students as mentally retarded. This figure was 18 per cent of all black secondary-school students, an alarming statistic to members of the committee.[22]

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[22] Ibid., p. 146-47.

In spite of the recommendations of the Committee on Race and Education for curriculum changes at Jefferson High School, the changes that did occur were slow to come.

Jefferson's classes were organized according to ability groups during the 1950's, a practice which continued in some subjects until 1968. The Educational Enrichment classes for gifted students resulted in at least a partial ability grouping. Heterogeneous grouping by ability and race, according to one teacher, was necessary to make classroom instruction bearable. He believed that a class composed entirely of low performers would be impossible to control. In a heterogeneous class, peer pressure exerted by the average students helped in the maintenance of some degree of order.[23]

Curriculum changes occurred throughout the 1960's but not all were planned changes. Teachers at Jefferson claimed that the increase in disciplinary problems in the classroom caused the academic quality of class work to suffer. Many staff members attempted to maintain the requirements of previous years, but found that to be impossible; large numbers of the students simply did not respond to their teaching methods. Furthermore, the curriculum's emphasis on the accomplishments of white Americans contributed to black students' indifference toward school.

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[23]Interview with Hugh McGinnis, January 7, 1970.

Although the blacks had asked for courses which reflected the Negro contribution to the nation's growth, the social studies course was not altered to any great extent until 1968-69. In 1964, however, school leaders selected an integrated textbook for the junior year history course which described contributions by both blacks and whites rather than dwelling only on one or the other.[24] Since 1964 an elective course in all the nation's minority groups has been offered to seniors. In January, 1968, when the course was altered to allow concentration solely on the black minority, it attracted a larger black enrollment.

In the later years, individual teachers who were interested in reaching black students altered elective courses to meet the desires of the blacks. A course in black literature, i.e., the use in a literature course of works written by black authors, was well-received. In the winter of 1969-70 the instructor commented that he would not concentrate solely upon black authors after that year. He believed that the black students at Jefferson were sophisticated enough to benefit from a course in modern literature which would include the best of black and white authors.[25] His classes were held in high repute among both

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[24]Oregonian, October 3, 1963, p. 26.

[25]Interview with William See, teacher at Jefferson High School since 1954, November 5, 1969.

black and white students because the dignity of the individual was respected.

Changes in curriculum to increase availability of vocational courses did not materialize until the end of the sixties. A work-study program for the special-achievement classes was launched in 1967 with the aid of Federal funds. By the 1968-69 school year, a number of employers agreed to provide employment on a part-time basis for those slower students.

A course in horticulture was added when the school district, at the urging of businessmen, acquired a greenhouse in northeast Portland. Other changes were proposed, but auto-mechanics training and food processing and management courses were not scheduled to commence until the 1969-70 school year.

When proposed additions to the vocational course offerings were announced, a mixed reaction came from the black community. The old controversy that had originated between W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington concerning an academic versus vocational education for Negroes again came to the surface. Militants adhering to DuBois' position denounced the courses. The food processing and management course, they claimed was directed simply toward preparing blacks to do kitchen work. Vocational courses for blacks

and academic courses for whites was, in their opinion, sheer racist discrimination.[26]

Other members of the black community favored the stand taken by Booker T. Washington. They believed it only practical to teach those who did not want to, or were unable to, go to college a skill with which to earn a living. To many of these blacks, a partial solution to the inner-city problems was economic. With a skill to sell and a steady income, many blacks might be able to alleviate other difficulties.

These opposing ideological positions among blacks confused some whites who wanted to classify all blacks in a single category. Many whites were unaware that social-class structure has the same influence on blacks as it does on whites. Because of restrictive housing practices, blacks, however, do not have the spatial separation as do whites. Since, for the most part, blacks live in a common area, whites tend to overlook the blacks' socio-economic differences. The whites' tendency to lump all blacks together contributed to their lack of understanding of the blacks' problems.

Blacks avowed that they had been ignored during the 1950's, so early in the 1960's, individual black students, in an effort to gain

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[26]Interview with Dr. R. William Clark, teacher and Dean at Jefferson since 1956, October 10, 1969.

recognition, began to speak out. Although these militant spokesmen were not well organized and had only a small following, they were successful in creating a disturbance. Throughout most of the decade, the school administration insisted that these students were being influenced and encouraged by non-students.

Perhaps newspaper accounts and television broadcasts did influence black students at Jefferson. Even the administration recognized the movement for civil rights by inviting black civil rights workers who had been in the South to speak at Jefferson's faculty meetings. Most of the teachers sympathized with the movement, but from comments made, a number of them still believed that all the blacks' problems were in the South.[27]

Within the school, blacks became more aggressive for their "place in the sun." The upper main hall at Jefferson was traditionally the domain of white athletes and other white students of high status. In 1962-63, blacks who had previously clustered in the lower main hall began to move upstairs.[28] Tension increased and loud profane words interrupted classes. Order in classrooms became more difficult to maintain and some teachers found themselves spending large

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[27]Interview with Hugh McGinnis, January 7, 1970.

[28]Interview with Hugh McGinnis and R. William Clark.

amounts of time on disciplinary problems to the detriment of subject matter.

In 1963, a riot, "race riot" according to the newspapers, focused the city's attention on the black-white problems at Jefferson. The disturbance occurred after a Jefferson-Grant football game. The two schools were arch-rivals, and clashes between their students were commonplace; but, because of Jefferson's black enrollment, the racial aspects of the confrontation were emphasized by the news media. A twenty-one year old youth, who allegedly was carrying a dangerous weapon, was among the nineteen persons arrested as a result of the riot.[29] The presence of the older youth lent credence to the theory that "outside agitation" was causing most of the trouble at Jefferson.

In the fall of 1964, a football game was the scene of another outbreak between black and white students. Convinced that a small group of hooligans was responsible, the principal asked the school board for a "get tough" policy. "Roy Malo Given Green Light to Oust Bum Apples," was The Oregonian's headline of the board's reply.[30] Most of the public approved of the newly adopted measures as did the teachers who were having difficulty with their classes.

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[29]Oregonian, October 3, 1963, p. 26.

[30]Oregonian, Nevember 10, 1964, p. 1.

In the fall of 1966, another outbreak occurred between blacks and whites after a football game. The community's assumption that these periodic outbreaks were Jefferson's responsibility angered Jefferson's personnel. One teacher declared that the troubles were not just Jefferson's problem: "It's a community problem and Jefferson just happens to be the hub around which it is spinning."[31] The Committee on Race and Education had voiced the same opinion two years earlier, and the larger community still had not accepted responsibility for the problem.

Instead, as a reporter remarked, "The whites are voting with their feet and moving out of Albina."[32] He was apparently correct. Jefferson's enrollment dropped from 2,315 in 1963 to 1,921 in 1966. Of course, a change in the south boundary of Jefferson's attendance area, one of high black concentration, also affected the enrollment, but the percentage of blacks at Jefferson continued to increase significantly.

The following summer, the Albina ghetto erupted with fires and vandalism. The black community's interpretation of the riot was that Albina youth were enraged because school budget restrictions had

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[31] Oregonian, September 25, 1966, p. 26.

[32] Ibid.

made it necessary to cut back the athletic program at Jefferson. One white official declared that the riots should not be connected to the reduced school athletic program because Grant and Wilson high school students, while equally affected, had not created any disturbances as a result of the cutback.[33] This official, however, obviously did not appreciate the importance that the school athletic program had for the black students. Students at Wilson and Grant, schools located in middle-class sections of the city, had other outlets for their energies and other means of winning individual recognition. Young blacks to whom The Oregonian reporter talked, repeated the feeling of frustration, "No one listens to us." The youths accused reporters of always going to black adults for their information, adults who, in the youths' opinion, were "Uncle Toms." "They don't speak for us," the students declared.[34]

The fall term of school opened in a tense atmosphere. Scuffles, "shakedowns," and fights occurred in the halls and cafeteria. A teacher, injured while trying to break up a fight, required surgery to repair an elbow.[35] Teacher morale, already low, slumped further.

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[33]Oregonian, August 6, 1967, Forum, pp. 6-7.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Oregonian, October 28, 1967, p. 15.

The official opinion was that most of the trouble stemmed from non-student sources. Jefferson's principal proposed four steps to reduce the problems:

1. Keep non-student loiterers out of the school.
2. Expell trouble-makers.
3. Reduce the traffic near the school.
4. Reduce outside agitation.[36]

Administrative action accomplished the first three steps. The fourth, outside agitation, was primarily directed toward Upward Bound tutors from Reed College. Three boys who had attended the Reed Upward Bound program had, according to Jefferson's principal, consistently created trouble since they returned to Jefferson from the summer program. In addition, these students could find nothing worthwhile at Jefferson after their return. The "trouble-making" leaders were attracting some followers from the younger blacks, but the older students were ignoring them, he added.[37]

Race-related problems reflect the community in which they occur, claimed one Upward Bound tutor from Reed College. He believed that a Black Student Union, which the boys were trying to

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[36]Oregonian, November 1, 1967, p. 12.

[37]Ibid.

create, was simply a means for them to become more involved with the school. These students were attempting to be heard and no one was listening to them. Rondal Snodgrass, a teacher at Jefferson from 1963-65 and then at Reed College, pointed out that "very few" Jefferson teachers lived in Albina or could identify with the Albina area. He asked whether many of them should actually be teaching at Jefferson. Were they in sympathy with the student body?[38] One black student stated, "The student teachers from Reed have gotten closer to us in a few weeks than the regular teachers who've been here 20 years. It's no new game being shut out by a teacher." He added, "We've had that since grade school."[39]

The editor of The Oregonian reflected the community's attitude later that week. In the past, he claimed, Portland school authorities had been strict regarding clubs and organizations in the schools. A Black Student Union, with the presumed associated violence, scarcely qualified under the school system's standards.[40]

The Church-Community Action Program (C-CAP), a group of interested citizens from diverse backgrounds, met to discuss the issue.

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[38]Oregonian, November 3, 1967, p. 18.

[39]Oregonian, April 11, 1968, p. 12.

[40]Editorial, Oregonian, November 8, 1967, p. 26.

Ellen Law, a black teacher at Jefferson, charged that "about 20" of Jefferson's teachers were prejudiced on racial matters. C-CAP asked school board members to study the faculty situation at Jefferson.[41] The committee members claimed that they were not taking any side but were simply seeking a solution to the problems of the school.

Later that winter, Robert Nelson, chairman of a study committee on racial matters appointed by Mayor Terry Schrunk, submitted a report. "It seems as though the administration at Jefferson High School was more concerned with 'keeping the lid on' and controlling the situation, and getting tough than taking the lid off, looking into the pot, and saying, 'let's see what can be done creatively.'"[42] His committee recommended that certain changes be made at Jefferson:

1. Transfer ten or twelve teachers who Nelson declared "do not want to teach out there."

2. Do a more complete job of teaching the Negro's role in American history.

3. Recruit more Negro teachers.

4. Employ a full-time race relations person.

5. Curtail the transfer of white students from Jefferson.[43]

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[41] Oregonian, November 9, 1967, p. 33.

[42] Oregonian, December 12, 1967, p. 1.

[43] Ibid., p. 25.

Nelson claimed, "We are not sending our young people to school to learn to conform to a set of established prejudices, but rather to open their minds for a creative future."[44]

Again the attitude of many people in the community was similar to the opinion the editor of The Oregonian expressed in his rebuttal to the committee's report. "The question is not," he declared, "will there be too much forced conformity? It is: will a tiny minority of the student body--perhaps 30 or 40 students out of 1900--be permitted to disrupt the school program for all."[45]

The community was disturbed by the unsettled conditions at Jefferson. Responsible officials could not condone violence in the school, so the administrators suppressed the turbulent actions but they did little or nothing to correct the underlying causes.

Jefferson High School attracted the attention of the community once more in the spring of 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King was shot. Both blacks and whites cried together when President Kennedy was assassinated, one teacher explained, but when King was shot, the blacks drew off by themselves. A number of blacks were sincerely sorrowful and bitter. "I thought I had been accepted by the blacks,"

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[44]Ibid.

[45]Editorial, Oregonian, December 13, 1967, p. 40.

remarked one teacher, "but on that day, they let me know that I was white."[46]

School leaders anticipated trouble at Jefferson following Dr. King's assassination. Initially they announced that the school would be closed on April 8 and 9 to "cool off." This directive was later rescinded; classes would be held on April 8, and all schools in the city would be closed on April 9 in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King. The occasion was marked by numerous school absences but no large-scale violence.[47]

William Knouff announced later that spring to the school board: "We have tried to operate Jefferson just like any other high school. But it is perhaps time the board takes the stand that Jefferson is not any other high school and must be handled differently."[48]

The school board members reportedly began to seek a long-range solution as well as some short-range relief for the strife at Jefferson. They designated Jefferson as part of the Model School Program, thereby making available Federal monies for working with the school's disadvantaged youth. The principal received additional

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[46]Interviews with teachers who were at Jefferson at the time when Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated.

[47]Oregonian, April 10, 1968, p. 19.

[48]Oregonian, April 9, 1968, p. 16.

personnel to work in the problem areas. A full-time attendance officer was assigned to relieve the pressure on the vice-principals, and four community agents were hired. The latter would counsel students and assist those who needed clothing, lunches, books, and other supplies which their parents could not provide.

Some officials discussed the possibility of closing Jefferson when the John Adams High School was completed. They suggested using the school as a community college or as an administrative building. School leaders generally were pessimistic about Jefferson's future. "Jeff will be all black in three years if the tide does not change," predicted a vice-principal.[49]

White student leaders, when interviewed by a reporter for The Oregonian, asked that a firm hand be taken at Jefferson. They claimed that they saw certain people repeatedly commit violence, but that no action was taken against the "culprits."[50] The white students expressed the opinion that many of the school's problems stemmed from the administration's permissive policy toward blacks.

The Oregonian interviewed four black student leaders to enable them to express their views. These blacks suggested that the

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[49]Oregonian, April 10, 1968, p. 19, quoting vice-principal George Guthrie.

[50]Oregonian, April 9, 1968, p. 27.

white students were becoming panicky because of the actions of a few trouble-makers. The blacks' opinion was that if the whites would cooperate, the students themselves could control the outbursts.[51]

Leadership had been nebulous among the black students during the first half of the decade. Several factions existed, but in the early years the militants received the major share of attention. Force, in addition to the usual peer group pressure, kept the militants' followers in line. The staff classified two or three of these leaders as "hoods."[52] The "hood" element was well known in the neighborhood, and the suggestion was made that one way to help Jefferson would be for the community to "clean up" the neighborhood. Ron Taylor, a Jefferson track star in 1962, told a reporter for The Oregonian in 1966 that ". . . dope is sold on the streetcorners--there are whorehouses 8 blocks from the school, but nobody says anything." He believed that he knew what was going on because only a few years prior to the interview, ". . . I was just a plain hood like the ones you say are causing the trouble."[53]

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[51]Oregonian, April 11, 1968, p. 34.

[52]Interview with teachers who taught at Jefferson during the 1950's and 1960's.

[53]Oregonian, October 5, 1966, p. 9.

The rowdy leadership eventually gave way to articulate and thoughtful blacks. Many were no less militant, but more objective. They neither encouraged nor desired violence, but they did press hard for their cause.[54] In the spring of 1968, Jefferson's black students attempted to inform white students about black culture by presenting a "Soul Assembly." The black students hoped that through their music they could improve the relationship between blacks and whites. The presentation was so well-received that in May they performed before a large crowd at the Portland Civic Auditorium.

Although the program was primarily designed to educate whites, the producers' and performers' remarks indicate that the effort also helped them to establish their own identity as blacks. One seventeen-year-old boy said, "We are finding a beauty in being black--finding there is no shame in it any more. The old ideas," he continued, "that black is bad; kinky hair is bad; you are ugly; that is bad; are no longer important concepts. The way you think and the pride you have is the important thing."[55] A senior involved in the production said, "We have been stuffed full of white ideas. The black man wouldn't relate to it." Now, he claimed, blacks were exhibiting

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[54]Interview with teachers who taught at Jefferson during the 1960's.

[55]Oregonian, April 30, 1968, p. 19.

some aspects of black culture. He implied that blacks by now had the benefit of exposure to two cultures and wanted to be proud of them both.[56]

Pride had always been a tradition at Jefferson. A new principal, appointed in May, 1968, came to the school because "I think I saw hope--that the school could regain the pride and school of champions attitude it had for many years."[57] William Proppe was directed by the board merely to observe at Jefferson for the remainder of the school year. During the summer, he visited inner-city schools in other large cities so that he might become acquainted with the methods used at these schools to alleviate their problems.

Before the end of the school year, the staff for the following year was selected. Heeding what members of the black community had said about racist teachers at Jefferson, all teachers who wanted to transfer from the school were given the opportunity to do so. The principal and the vice-principals then reviewed the remaining teachers and asked some to accept transfers.[58]

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[56]Ibid.

[57]Oregonian, December 8 1968, p. 10.

[58]Interview with Dr. William Proppe, principal of Jefferson since the 1968-69 school year, October 17, 1969.

A stringent screening system was initiated the following spring. The administration undertook the task of justifying the retention of each teacher at Jefferson. Three questions were asked about each teacher:

1. Does he want to teach at Jefferson?
2. Is he in sympathy with Jefferson's goals?
3. Is he contributing toward these goals?[59]

Even though these measures had been taken, teachers report that the 1968-69 school year was unusually tense. Abundant help, however, was available: teacher-interns and tutors from Reed College and Portland State College, as well as practice teachers, were in the building. Additional blacks had been placed on the faculty and also in para-professional positions. Because the total enrollment had declined, space was ample and the large staff permitted a low teacher-pupil ratio. The student body had more or less polarized as various factions of blacks and whites competed for positions of status in the school. Angry accusations and frequent assaults in the halls and school grounds created a strained situation.

The percentage of black students at Jefferson had risen to over 40 per cent, but the actual number of blacks had decreased from

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[59] Ibid.

the previous year. John Adams High School, scheduled for completion by the fall of 1969, would require a boundary shift so the board members decided to wait until the Adams school was ready.[60] At the same school board meeting at which this decision was made, a growing division was apparent among school board members concerning educating the disadvantaged. Some members claimed too much attention was being paid to the racial aspects of education while other issues were being ignored. They suggested a balanced approach.[61] Board members, nevertheless, expressed continuing confidence in the new principal at Jefferson, William Proppe.

Mob action, shortly after the school year started, again put Jefferson's name into the newspapers. A white Jefferson student was attacked and seriously injured by several other students. As a result, his parents transferred him to another school in the city. This boy and his family had been loyal to Jefferson; they had tried to make integration at the school a success. Proppe put the problem straight to the students. School leaders issued a bulletin describing the events surrounding the incident and stating the way in which the affair affected Jefferson. The bulletin then posed a series of questions to

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[60] Oregonian, August 14, 1968, p. 15.

[61] Ibid.

which, according to one teacher, the school's students gave serious thought. Some of the questions were:

1. Why did it happen?
2. Would you return to Jeff?
3. Is Jeff better or worse off for the incident?
4. How do you get self-respect?
5. How does Jeff get pride?[62]

Although some of the students, both black and white, were willing to discuss the issues, others were not. A three-way leadership struggle for control of student activities was occurring among the students: between black students and white students, between members of the black group, and between the "hood" element and the more serious students.

Staff members report that they believe the leadership shifted from white to black at this time. The change was not the result of an actual confrontation, but was the result of a gradual sharing and shifting of power. Blacks were still outnumbered and would have been defeated in any "block" voting, but the leadership qualities of individual black students appealed to whites and blacks alike.

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[62]Oregonian, October 10, 1968, p. 43.

Although white students were still prominent in student positions, in the decision-making groups, black voices predominated.

The staff began to include students in making decisions regarding school matters. Assemblies, changes in cafeteria rules, and changes in student conduct codes, all involved student planners. In this way, students were shown that they were an important part of the over-all school organization.

The teachers were at Jefferson because they wanted to teach in that school and the administration believed that each teacher had something significant to contribute. The new staff was young and included more Negro teachers. The median age in 1967-68 had been 39 and in 1968-69 it was 31. The median age for all high schools in Portland was 40.[63] But the popularly-accepted idea that the so-called communication gap is primarily a result of vast age difference was disproved at Jefferson. Although the median age was only 31, some of the most successful teachers on the staff had been teaching almost that many years. As one of the experienced teachers said, "The young teachers try very hard, but they often run out of resources and get

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[63]Administrative Research Department, "Salaries and Age Distribution of Instructional and Other Personnel, 1967-68 and 1968-69," Portland Public Schools.

frustrated. The older teacher just has more techniques to draw from and should be able to reach more students in his classroom."[64]

Staff and students reviewed the school's conduct rules, and, if they were found no longer applicable, they were abolished. Remaining rules were expected to be followed. In an attempt to avoid direct confrontation, the staff employed all possible means to induce the students to use self-control and to conform to conduct acceptable to the student body and staff. Although fights among students were frequent, the relationship between the blacks and the administration seemed to improve. Nevertheless, because of the continued disruption at Jefferson, the school board again assigned a panel to study the case.

Although the school year had been comparatively quiet, school board members were alarmed by newspaper reports of "over a hundred assaults at Jefferson." One member emphatically declared, "We still have a dangerous and difficult situation over there, and we need some damned fast staff recommendations for trying to solve the problems."[65]

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[64]Informant from Jefferson High School.

[65]Oregonian, February 26, 1969, Section III, p. 7.

In an interview with a friendly reporter, students at Jefferson were given an opportunity to chide school board members for their apparently hostile attitude toward Jefferson. One student said, "You appear to look on Jefferson not as a learning institution but as an institution of violence . . . ."[66] That the school had accomplished much, a spokesman for the board admitted, but suggested that board members recognize that the racial tension at Jefferson affeqted all the people of the city. "You are working it out while all the other people just talk about it," another member said, "that's why you are real."[67]

In March, white students began to react to the changes which had been occurring at the school. They complained that they felt little responsibility for the conditions of the blacks and resented the implication that they were accountable. Whites were tired of being assaulted, intimidated, and at times "shook down." Administrative policies, which they believed to be solicitous of the black students' demands, appeared to be ignoring the whites.[68]

With placards and slogans, often borrowed from the blacks, the white students demonstrated. Observers said black students

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[66]Oregonian, March 11, 1969, p. 11.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Oregonian, March 23, 1969, p. 1.

standing in the school looking out on the demonstrators were somewhat confused. "Man, what have those guys got to complain about," was a typical reaction.

The administration expressed willingness to talk about the issues with the white students just as they had with the blacks. Although much of the white students' reaction had been purely emotional, complaints were aired and tension was reduced.

As the 1960's drew to a close, the principal of Jefferson stated that the prime requisite of a contemporary school staff is the ability to change and that only a small percentage of a high school's efforts should be devoted to training for conformity. "School today is a place to be involved, not a place to sit at the feet of a pontificator."[69] Jefferson High School had become an excellent setting for such involvement because it was reflecting the problems of the inner-city and urban center.

Numerous changes took place at Jefferson High School while the composition of the student body was becoming half white and half black instead of all white. Problems arising from this condition continue to plague the school's administration. Many people in the

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[69]John Guernsey, "Proppe: The Man at Jefferson," Oregonian, December 8, 1968, Magazine, pp. 10-11.

community, both black and white, believe that progress is being made toward the solution of these problems. So long as inequities and discrimination exist in the community, the same attributes will, however, be reflected in the school.

EPILOGUE

Alterations in curriculum and teaching methods at Jefferson High School did not commence until near the end of the 1960's. The questions arise: Why did it take so long to incorporate these changes? What are the future prospects for both whites and blacks at Jefferson?

The bureaucratic system built up to operate the large district contributed to fostering uniformity throughout the school system. Of greater influence, perhaps, was the "myth of unitary community."[1] Educators have long sustained the thought that for the design of a school program, the city is a unit. They did not recognize, for the purposes of education, various racial, ethnic, religious, and economic differences in the people of the city.

According to the myth, education is a process that functions in the same manner regardless of class or geographic area. To provide courses or programs for one neighborhood which are not available in another would create group and class differences and widen the socio-economic gap at the adult level.[2] Uniformity is equated with

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[1]Robert H. Salisbury, "Schools and Politics in the Big City," Harvard Educational Review, 37 (Spring, 1967), 412-13.

[2]Ibid.

egalitarianism. Educational leaders and most of the general public believe that "equality of opportunity" exists when the same courses of study are offered to all students. For each student to excell under his own initiative is considered "democratic" and the "American way." Such a policy denies minority groups an educational program designed to fit their requirements. Jefferson's lower-class black students struggled and failed in courses suitable for white middle-class students.

Educational leaders in Portland adhered to the doctrine of the unitary community until protests from the black minority forced a re-appraisal. In the late 1960's they initiated changes that directly applied to Jefferson. School officials became more concerned as the de facto segregation of northern cities came under as sharp attack as the de jure segregated schools of the South. Many national educators believed that compensatory education did not sufficiently offset the deficiencies of segregated schooling. In January of 1970, Dr. Robert Blanchard, Portland's superintendent of schools, recommended to the school board a radical change of the entire school system.[3] In order

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[3]Blanchard's recommendation to integrate the Portland schools has support not only from judicial decisions, but also recent educational research. James S. Coleman et al., in Equality of Educational Opportunity: Summary (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966), claims that only through integration of the schools, can equal opportunity in education be accomplished. Various viewpoints of that

to reduce the concentration of blacks in the Albina schools, he recommended that the school district be divided into four sub-districts (later changed to three). Boundaries were drawn to give each sub-district a social, racial, and economic balance in population. An assistant superintendent with near-autonomous control, and an advisory school board will direct each sub-district. Such a reorganization was designed to reduce the distance between the decision-makers and classroom problems.[4]

Jefferson High School's racial composition is directly affected by the establishment of the new school boundaries. The sub-district boundaries will divide Albina and the black community. Each sub-district will have from 7 to 11 per cent black student population and no

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controversial report are featured in the Harvard Educational Review, 38 (Winter, 1968). Nancy H. St. John conducted a study of de facto segregation in New England. She finds in "De Facto Segregation and Interracial Association in High Schools," Sociology of Education, 37 (Spring, 1964), 326-344, that integration in the elementary schools tends to foster interracial association in high school. Black leaders in high school tend to come from integrated elementary schools. Alan B. Wilson finds that boys from lower-class homes raised their levels of aspiration and educational goals when attending a school with a substantial number of students from higher socio-economic classes. "Residential Segregation of Social Classes and Aspiration of High School Boys," American Sociological Review, 24 (December, 1959), 836-844.

[4]Oregonian, January 21, 1970, p. 1.

school will contain over 25 per cent black enrollment.[5] Jefferson will no longer be the "Negro high school."

Strangely, Jefferson's black students and their parents received the announced change with marked lack of enthusiasm. The Jefferson staff's concerted effort over the last two years to intill in the blacks a pride for Jefferson has been successful. Black students espouse the same pride in their school as Jeffersonians have for sixty years and they resent being forced to leave for other high schools. The recently acquired pride in their blackness influences many of the students. Blacks feel compelled to prove that "their" school can compete with whites and excell.

Some of the militants interpret the planned division of black students as an attempt to destroy Black Power in Portland's schools.[6] Their pride in being black, their identification with the black group, will be lost, they explain, if the black students are divided among several schools. At Jefferson their numbers are sufficient to give them political strength. Scattered among several schools, they fear that, as in the 1950's, black students will become lost in the crowd and ignored. At their new schools the blacks have misgivings about being

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Oregonian, March 16, 1970, p. 15.

pressed into classes which are academically-oriented and taught by teachers who may not be responsive to black students' problems. Jefferson's teachers have only in recent years become sensitive to blacks' needs. Blacks are reluctant to relinquish these hard-won gains.

Will the educational myth of the "unitary community" function once again? On the other hand, will programs similar to the Jefferson Project receive adequate funding and teacher support to insure success?

Whites criticize the reorganization because it threatens the traditional neighborhood school policy. Middle schools and high schools will be organized on a sub-district basis. Whites not now included in Jefferson's attendance area resent their assignment to the school. White parents are fearful of sending their children there because so much of the news about Jefferson in recent years has concerned violence and black-white clashes.

Others are concerned about control of the decision-making authority. School board members show anxiety over dividing the district and establishing competitive units. They believe that the school board should appoint advisory boards to aid each sub-district assistant superintendent. The board was reluctant to relinquish its

power and authority, for in essence the advisory boards would be merely extensions of the school board.

An opposing point of view in the community is voiced by leaders of the Citizens' Committee for Better Schools who advocate that the advisory boards be petition-appointed by an independent committee rather than by the school board. Members should, they declare, include a cross section of residents, students, and teachers from different races, cultures, and income levels.[7] Their stipulation that half of the members be black does not meet with the school board's approval.

The battle lines are forming; the editor of The Oregonian, the members of the school board, and many white people favor the reorganization. Those opposed include a large portion of the black community and many of the school district's classroom teachers. The teachers resent their exclusion from the reorganization planning and fear that the change will not improve the educational quality of the schools.[8]

In the 1970-71 school year, the Portland school administration faces a tremendous challenge. An attempt by a large northern city

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[7]Oregonian, March 16, 1970, p. 15.

[8]Ibid.

to eliminate de facto segregation by a massive reorganization of the school system will attract widespread attention. The problems facing the administrators are formidable. In addition to the complications inherent in the decentralization, they face both angry and rebellious white and black parents.

The changes in Portland's public school system instigated by the influx of black shipyard workers during World War II have not ceased. A static system, however, should not be the goal of any school administrator. When and if the problems caused by racial and socio-economic factors are solved in Portland's schools, change should still continue in order to meet the shifting needs of the community.

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APPENDIX I

NEGRO BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN 1933

Business	Number	Business	Number
Newspaper	1	Automobile Washing	1
Club House	3	Second Hand Store	1
Printing Shops	1	Dressmaking	2
Pool Halls	5	Drayage	1
Barber Shops	5	House Contractor	1
Hotel	1	Interior Decorators	8
Restaurants	8	Real Estate	2
Tailoring Shop	1	Cabinet Making	1
Cleaning Shops	2	Bakery	1
Shoe Shining	15	Oregon Mutual Aid Ass'n	1
Beauty Parlors	10	Building Association	1
Caterers	8	Laundry	1
Chicken Farm	1	Music Studio	2

(Source: Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," pp. 56-57)

APPENDIX II

EMPLOYMENT OF PORTLAND NEGROES IN 1931

Business	Number	Business	Number
Pullman Porters	70	City (restrooms, etc.)	15
Station Porters	10	Confectionary Store	2
Railroad Shopmen	20	Pool Halls	5
Pullman Yard Works	20	Clubs	3
Barbershop, store	12	Hotels	15
Building Porters	120	Music Teacher	3
Hotel Waiters (Part time)	6	Printer	2
Railway Waiters	42	Railroad Mail Clerk	2
Railway Cooks	8	Chiropodist	2
Private Car Crews	6	Florist	3
Cooks, Housemaids	60	Car Washer	6
Maids in Stores, Theaters, and Restrooms	25	Bootblack	30
Packing House Workers	20	Professional	
City Street Workers	15	Physician	1
U.S. Gov't Employees	13	Lawyers	3
County Employees	2	Dentist	1
State Insurance Dept.	2	Ministers	6

(Source: Hill, "The Negro in Oregon: A Survey," pp. 56-57)

APPENDIX III

JOBS OF THE FATHERS OF THE NEGRO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES (Jefferson High School 1961-65)

Jobs or Places of Employment	Number[a]	%[b]
Laborer	66	29.0
Foundryman	37	16.3
Porter/waiter, railroad	29	12.7
Janitor	16	7.0
Butcher--wholesale	9	3.9
Railroad depot worker	8	3.5
United States Post Office	5	2.1
Service Station worker	5	2.1
Waiter--hotel/restaurant	5	2.1
Hospital worker	4	1.7
Barber	4	1.7
Military, enlisted man	3	1.3
Auto mechanic	3	1.3
Plumber	2	0.9
Musician	2	0.9
Longshoreman	2	0.9
Minister	2	0.9
Surveyor--state highway department	1	0.4
Shoe repair	1	0.4
Floor finisher	1	0.4
Social worker--county	1	0.4
Real estate salesman	1	0.4
Stockman--department store	1	0.4
City park--recreation worker	1	0.4
Rose City Transit--bus driver	1	0.4
City police	1	0.4
City civil servant	1	0.4
Public school teacher	1	0.4
Grinder	1	0.4
County deputy sheriff	1	0.4
House painter	1	0.4

APPENDIX III--Continued

Jobs or Places of Employment	Number[a]	%[b]
Crane operator	1	0.4
Grocery clerk	1	0.4
Cook	1	0.4
Truck driver	1	0.4
Laundry worker	1	0.4
Medical doctor--surgeon	1	0.4
Self-employed	1	0.4
Disabled and deceased	3	
Unemployed	2	
No information	115	

[a]219 individuals

[b]percentage of employed

(Source: Clark, "A Study of Negro Graduates")

APPENDIX IV

JOBS OF THE MOTHERS OF THE NEGRO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES (Jefferson High School 1961-65)

Jobs or Places of Employment	Number[a]	%[b]
Domestic	56	44.8
Hospital worker	29	23.2
Machine sewing	6	4.8
Registered Nurse	5	4.0
Sales clerk	4	3.2
Cook	3	2.4
Laundry worker	3	2.4
Teacher--public school	3	2.4
Presser	2	1.6
Medical Ass't.--U. of O. Med. School	1	0.8
Real estate sales	1	0.8
Grocery clerk	1	0.8
Laboratory technician	1	0.8
Janitress	1	0.8
Factory worker	1	0.8
Surgery aid	1	0.8
City civil servant	1	0.8
Registered Practical Nurse	1	0.8
Poultry worker	1	0.8
United States Post Office	1	0.8
Waitress	1	0.8
Nursery worker	1	0.8
Telephone company	1	0.8
Housewife	133	
Aid to Dependent Children	15	
No information	97	

[a]125 individuals

[b]percentage of the employed

(Source: Clark, "A Study of Negro Graduates")

APPENDIX V

WHITE-NEGRO POPULATION IN OREGON: 1850-1960

Year	Total	Negro	% Negro
1850[a]	13,141	54	--
1860[a]	52,465	128	0.2
1870[a]	90,923	346	0.4
1880[a]	174,768	487	0.3
1890[a]	322,767	1,186	0.4
1900[a]	413,536	1,105	0.3
1910[b]	672,765	1,492	0.2
1920[b]	783,389	2,144	0.3
1930[b]	953,786	2,234	0.2
1940[c]	1,089,684	2,265	0.2
1950[c]	1,521,341	11,529	0.8
1960[c]	1,768,687	18,133	1.0

Source:

[a]U. S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1907, number thirty.

[b]U. S. Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1934, fifty-sixth number.

[c]U. S. Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1962, eighty-third edition.

APPENDIX VI

WHITE-NEGRO POPULATION IN PORTLAND: 1900-1960

Year	Total	White	Negro	% Negro
1900	90,426	80,614	750	0.9
1910	207,214	198,952	1,045	0.5
1920	258,288	252,961	1,556	0.6
1930	301,815	296,177	1,559	0.5
1940	305,394	299,707	1,931	0.6
1950	373,628	360,388	9,529	2.5
1960	372,676	351,757	15,637	4.2

Source:

U. S. Census Office, Census Reports, Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900, Population, Vol. II, Part II, p. 141.

U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population, Vol. III, p. 523.

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APPENDIX VII

5920 SW 18th Drive
Portland 19, Ore.
October 29, 1954

Mr. Ragnor O. Johnson, Commissioner
Oregon Real Estate Department
State Office Building
Salem, Ore.

Dear Sir:

Late in August, my wife and I decided to sell our home, at the above address. But we were not sure we could get for it what we put into it, so we didn't do any more than to consult with a couple or three real estate agents to see what they would advise. In September, we asked a friend of ours who is a real estate agent if he would be interested in coming out to look at the place. He, Herman Plummer, was, and about October 6 did so. He brought two associates with him. All are Negroes. This was about one p.m.

About 4-1/2 to 5 hours later, I went into the office of another real estate agent which was nearby--the Sunset Realty company, Sunset Realtors Inc., at 6320 SW Capitol highway. I had contacted them previously and had taken my family to see two other houses which we might be interested in buying if we sold our house.

Almost immediately after I entered, Mrs. Lessler and Mr. McKay began to discuss our having Negro visitors, asked if we were thinking of selling to Negroes, etc. When I said yes, they immediately began lecturing me as if I were an errant child. They said I surely couldn't be thinking of ruining the beautiful neighborhood by selling our house to Negroes, that they "wouldn't think" of introducing a "foreign element" (those were McKay's words) into the neighborhood, etc.

APPENDIX VII--Continued

They also said that if they were to do such a thing as to sell a house to a Negro family--the house being in a "white" neighborhood--they would lose their real estate license and couldn't even sell property in Oregon any more. They said they knew of one case out on Foster road where a real estate agent had sold property in a white neighborhood to a Negro family and he had lost his license and was through as a real estate agent.

Would you please give me your reaction to all this, including the statements in the last paragraph?

Sincerely,

/s/ George B. Holcomb

(Source: Housing File, Portland Urban League, Portland, Oregon)

APPENDIX VII--Continued

STATE OF OREGON
Real Estate Department
Collection Agency Department
Salem

November 1, 1954

Mr. George B. Holcomb
5920 S. W. 18th Drive
Portland 19, Oregon

Dear Mr. Holcomb:

We acknowledge your letter regarding the sale of your property through Mr. Plummer to prospective purchasers who may be negroes. This question has been brought up many times in the past and has caused considerable discussion among real estate brokers.

I believe that the statement regarding the introduction of a foreign element in a neighborhood can be found in the Realtors' Code of Ethics. I will quote Article 34 which, I believe, is the thought which Mr. McKay wishes to convey to you: "A realtor should not be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or use which will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood."

It is the understanding in this office that discrimination because of race, color or creed is not intended by this article; however, should any action be taken against these brokers, it would have to be from his local board of realtors. There is nothing in the state law that would prohibit the sale of property to negroes.

We hope that this answers your questions. Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Sincerely yours,

RAGNOR O. JOHNSON
Real Estate Commissioner

/s/ H. P. Anderson,
Field Representative

HPA:bw

(Source: Housing File, Portland Urban League, Portland, Oregon)

Typed by: Marilyn C. Goodey

Multilithed by: Margaret Pluid