

Chapter I: History, housing and schools

Highlighting the History of Housing Segregation in Baltimore, Maryland and its Impact on the Events of April 27, 2015 and Beyond



JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of EDUCATION

CENTER FOR SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS

Maxine J. Wood, Director/Senior Advisor
The Pathways from Poverty Consortium

A focal point in Segregationist efforts in Baltimore

1910

- A Yale University-educated lawyer bought a house in the Mount Royal section of Baltimore, causing an uproar among whites.

The Result?

- An ordinance partitioning Baltimore City into black blocks and white blocks.

“The most pronounced ‘Jim Crow’ measure on record.”

– The New York Times

1910

The African-American lawyer, W. Ashbie Hawkins, bought a three-story row house at 1834 McCulloh Street – a prestigious neighborhood, at the time.

Baltimore Brew.com

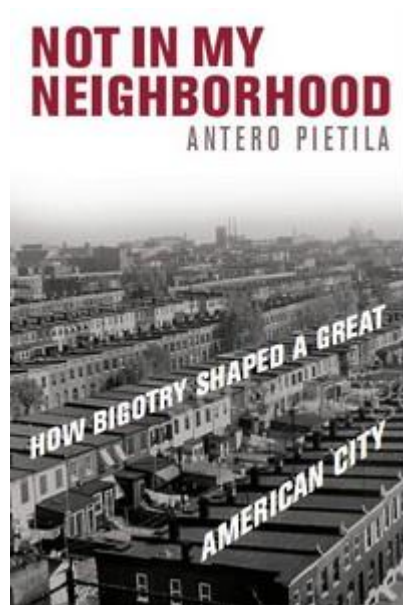
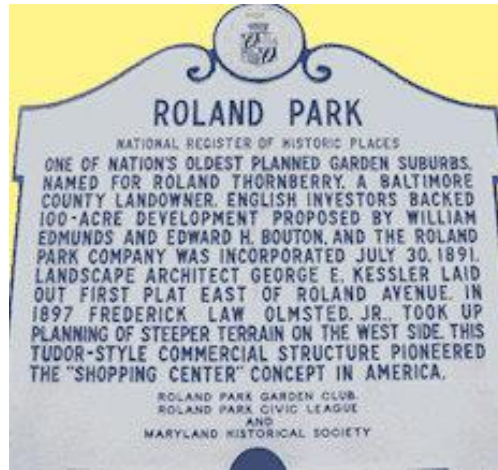
“History of Baltimore’s Racial Segregation”

<https://www.baltimorebrew.com/2010/03/15/history-of-baltimores-racial-segregation-includes-a-hard-look-at-newspapers-role/>
2010/03/15

W. Ashbie Hawkins:

1861-1941





Worth Noting from the past...

Roland Park in Baltimore City was an early planned suburb whose development spanned the Progressive Era (1890-1920) and demonstrated how a belief in segregation in real estate promoted the concept that African-Americans and Jews were bad for property values.

<http://hub.jhu.edu/magazine/2014/fall/roland-park-papers-archives>

...because they
restricted the property
rights of white homeowners
to sell to whomever they
wished.

APARTHEID BALTIMORE STYLE: THE RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION ORDINANCES OF 1910-1913*

GARRETT POWER**

On May 15, 1911, Baltimore Mayor J. Barry Mahool, who was known as an earnest advocate of good government, women's suffrage, and social justice, signed into law "[a]n ordinance for preserving peace, preventing conflict and ill feeling between the white and colored races in Baltimore city, and promoting the general welfare of the city by providing, so far as practicable, for the use of separate blocks by white and colored people for residences, churches and schools."¹ Baltimore's segregation law was the first such law to be aimed at blacks in the United States, but it was not the last. Various southern cities in Georgia, South Carolina, Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky enacted similar laws.²

The legal significance of housing segregation laws in the United States was shortlived. In 1917 the United States Supreme Court struck down the Louisville, Kentucky ordinance³ and thereby constitutionally eviscerated the ordinances of other cities as well. But the historical significance of Baltimore's segregation ordinances remains.

History remembers the Mahool administration for having placed Baltimore in the forefront of municipal reform. The story of how the Mahool government earnestly proposed and enacted an apartheid statute as a progressive social reform; it reminds us of the racist propensities of a covert conspiracy to enforce housing segregation, the development of democratic rule; and it sets the stage for understanding the vestiges of which persist in Baltimore yet today.

Throughout the early nineteenth century Baltimore housing was not racially segregated, and even following the Civil War, blacks lived

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 * This article is the second chapter of a book in progress, *A Chronicle of Twentieth Century Land Controls in Greater Baltimore*. It was funded in part by a grant from Resources for the Future.
 ** Professor of Law, University of Maryland School of Law.
 1. Baltimore, Md., Ordinance 692 (May 15, 1911).
 2. C. JOHNSON, PATTERNS OF NEGRO SEGREGATION 173-75 (1943); Rice, *Residential Segregation by Law, 1910-1917*, 34 J.S. HIST. 179, 181-82 (1968). The cities were: Atlanta, Ga.; Greenville, S.C.; Ashland, Roanoke, Richmond, Norfolk, and Portsmouth, Va.; Winston-Salem, N.C.; and Louisville, Ky.
 3. *Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60 (1917).

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In a counter-response—

The Mayor of Baltimore instructed Baltimore City building inspectors and Health Department investigators to cite anyone who rented or sold to blacks in predominantly white neighborhoods for code violations.

In 1925...

..18 Baltimore neighborhood associations formed the “Allied Civic and Protective Association” – to urge new and existing property owners to sign “Restrictive Covenants,” committing to never sell their property to blacks, Negroes, African Americans!

Covenants in
Baltimore were
enforced by
the *city-sponsored*
“Committee on
Segregation.”

[illegible]

1934

The Federal Housing Administration created by Congress...

- ...reflected U.S. racist tradition of rigid white/black separation in housing
 - ...openly supported racist covenants, largely excluding Blacks (even middle class, wealthy) from the home ownership boom of the 1930s-1960s
-

Typically, blacks were denied mortgages wherever they lived.

Restrictive policy meant the U.S. federal government endorsed a system of “financial apartheid.”

“Whites seeking the American Dream had access to a credit system backed by the U.S. government.”

“Blacks were subjected to unscrupulous lenders...” and paid a price--financial predators--contract systems with:

- Rigged installment plans
- Vulnerability to repossessions
- Poor repairs
- Decaying properties

This System of “Financial Apartheid”...

- Accelerated urban decline and growth of ghettos
- Prevented generations of blacks from gaining wealth typically generated from home ownership.



“Even as some municipalities and states began to pass laws prohibiting racial discrimination in housing beginning in the late 1940s, enforcement mechanisms were weak, and no effort was made to reverse the pattern of racial separation that was rapidly expanding across the American landscape.” – <http://www.epi.org> and <http://www.bnyee.org/edeconomicinequity.htm> By [Richard Rothstein](#) and [Mark Santow](#)

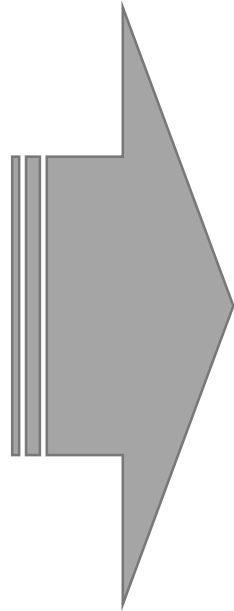
*“The distressed condition of African-American working and lower-middle-class families in Maryland’s largest city and elsewhere is almost entirely attributable to **federal policy** that prohibited black families from accumulating housing equity during the 1930s to the mid-1960s, thus preventing them from bequeathing that wealth to their children and grandchildren, as white suburbanites have done.”*

--Richard Rothstein
Economic Policy Institute

Black Contract Buyers

(An Interesting Phenomenon)

- unable to get mortgages
- restricted to overcrowded neighborhoods
- rented apartments at higher rents than those for similar dwellings in white neighborhoods



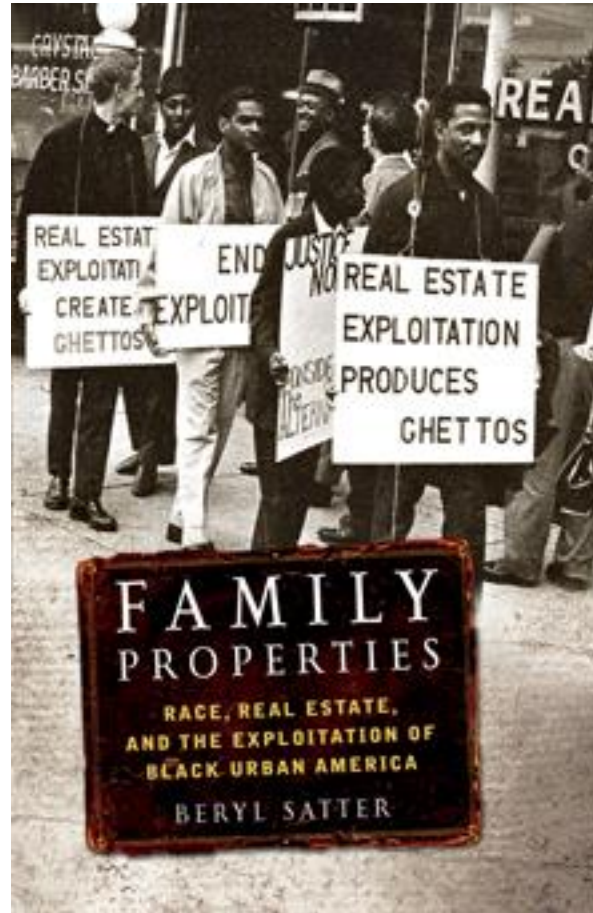
An alternative: Contract Sales

- Monthly payments were not amortized
- A single missed payment meant loss of a home
- No accumulated equity

Washington Post
May 3, 2015, Valerie Strauss

“Because black contract buyers knew how easily they could lose their homes, they struggled to make their inflated monthly payments. Husbands and wives both worked double shifts. They neglected basic maintenance. They subdivided their apartments, crammed in extra tenants, and when possible, charged their tenants hefty rents.”

*--Beryl Satter, author
Rutgers University
Family Properties*



- Contract buying was commonplace in Baltimore.
- It was **solely** due to the federal government's policy of denying mortgages to African-Americans, in either black or white neighborhoods.

Washington Post
May 3, 2015
Valerie Strauss

The United States Federal Government led the development of policies contributing to segregation.

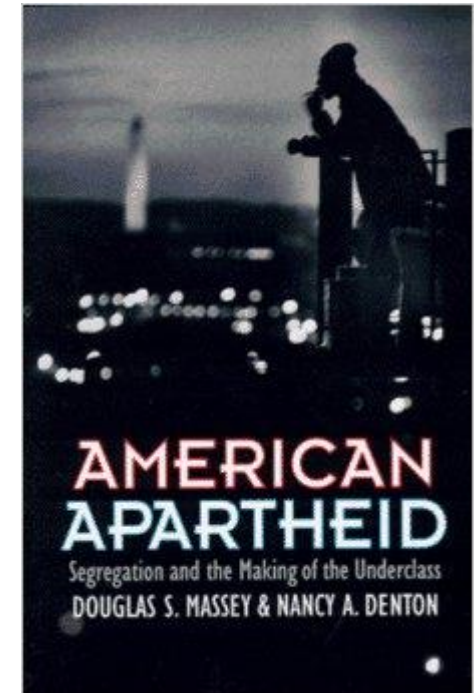
“There were 20th century federal, state, and local policies that were explicitly designed to separate the races—whose effects endure today...In any meaningful sense, neighborhoods and -in consequence, schools - have been segregated ‘de jure’.”

American Apartheid

Massey and Denton, 1993

Quotation from Education Leadership,

Vol. 70, No. 8, May 2013





Baltimore's Segregated and Economically Depressed Neighborhoods

By mid-1930s, 89% of the black population was confined to an area surrounding the downtown central district.

Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC)
basically ran two housing programs:

- One Black
 - One White
- 

Federal public housing policy, developed during the “New Deal” (1932-1939), respected existing neighborhood composition –

- ✓ Placing projects for low-income blacks in black ghettos
- ✓ Placing projects for middle-income whites in white neighborhoods
- ✓ Adopting regulations that established the practice of Redlining – excluding people of color from government-subsidized mortgages

www.huffingtonpost.com *The New Deal: Designed for Jim Crow*
Author: Richard Lyon, 10/20/2012

After WWII, Baltimore City continued segregationist programs and introduced public housing high-rises.

- The only vacant site, of 39 considered outside the city, chosen for additional Black housing—Cherry Hill
 - an isolated peninsula adjacent to a city landfill and incinerator

- Three high-density Black high rises built by HABC
 - Lafayette Court
 - Lexington Terrace
 - Murphy Homes

These projects created large, dense clusters of poverty and segregation.

Other acknowledged factors and actions that supported and sustained segregated housing include:

- Bank regulators from the Federal Reserve and other agencies approved **redlining** policies allowing banks and savings institutions to refuse loans to families in predominantly black or changing neighborhoods and to black families attempting to purchase homes in white suburbs. (Redline maps were first created by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, a New Deal agency.)
- Mayors and public officials organized homeowners associations and encouraged them to enact racial deed restrictions.
- The IRS extended tax exemptions to churches where associations were frequently based and to the associations, as well.

Education Leadership, Vol. 70, No. 8, May 2013

Between 1950 and 1964

Baltimore began aggressive urban renewal programs that displaced more than 25,000 people (85% black).

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and The Veterans Administration (VA) –

- Financial movement of working and lower-middle class whites (including those in public housing), out of cities
- Denied Mortgage insurance to blacks
- Prohibited developers from selling to blacks
- Required developers to write deed insurance restrictions that prohibited resale of homes to “incompatible racial elements.”

(Rothstein, 2012; Thomas Ritzdorf, 1997), Education Leadership, Vol. 70, No. 8, May 2013

The Federal Housing Act of 1968 (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968)

Outlawed:

- ◇ Refusal to sell or rent a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin
- ◇ Discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin in the sale or rental of a dwelling

UPDATE:

June 25, 2015

Supreme Court Decision

5-4 ruling

- Upholds the right to pursue housing discrimination claims
- Preserves the elements of the Fair Housing Act of 1968

- Baltimore's black population was subjected to a century of federal, state, local policies that restricted them to isolated slums.

Reference
"How Racism Doomed Baltimore"
The New York Times, Editorial
May 9, 2015

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/opinion/sunday/how-racism-doomed-baltimore.html?_r=0

- Current federal housing policies disproportionately direct low-income black families to segregated neighborhoods and away from middle class suburbs.

Reference
Washington Post
Valerie Strauss, May 3, 2015
"From Ferguson to Baltimore: the consequences of government-sponsored segregation"

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2015/05/03/from-ferguson-to-baltimore-the-consequences-of-government-sponsored-segregation/>

Worth Noting Currently...

- Many long-established ghettos are geographically isolated from mostly white suburbs
- Voluntary choice, charter schools, magnet schools, changes in attendance zones may influence low-income black children's enrollment in predominantly middle class schools

Comparatively Speaking

	Baltimore City	Surrounding Counties ¹
Black population	64% Black	23% Black
Adults who have high school diplomas or high school equivalence	80%	90%
College graduates	27%	36%
Unemployment rate	18% Black 7% White	9% Black 6% White
Poverty Rate	24%	8%

¹(Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County)

Washington Post
Valerie Strauss, May 3, 2015

A 1994 suit by civil rights groups against HUD re: segregated public housing in Baltimore.



Where were all the folks concerned with Baltimore's private property when Wells Fargo Bank first pushed sub-prime mortgages on Bmore's black families then foreclosed on their homes, leaving a trail of destruction 1,000 times worse than the #BaltimoreUprising?

<https://hastenthedownfall.wordpress.com/2015/04/30/freddie-gray-in-context-a-century-of-white-supremacy-in-baltimore/>

<http://www.slideshare.net/kirwaninstitute/2009-05-07crphousingcasestudiesreece> -- Slides 27 through 45

Eventual settlement required the government to provide vouchers to former public housing residents for apartments in integrated neighborhoods and included counseling and social services to support family success. Only a small number of families participate, has not dismantled Baltimore's black ghetto.

Washington Post
Valerie Strauss
May 3, 2015



“...the acute nature of segregation in Baltimore — and the tools that were developed to enforce it over such a long period of time — have left an indelible mark and given that city a singular place in the country’s racial history.”

Editorial Board
The New York Times
May 9, 2015