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MAKING IT WORK BEFORE THE MOVEMENT: AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND RESISTANCE IN 1940s AND 1950s PORTLAND, MAINE¹

BY JUSTUS HILLEBRAND

African Americans in Portland, Maine, in the 1940s and 1950s made up less than 0.5% of the population. As a consequence, discourse on race was more subtle than it was in other parts of the country. The Portland black community, as in other small northern New England cities, lacked the numbers for broad public or political action. Instead, African Americans developed individual and informal strategies of resistance aimed at broadening opportunities in education, employment, and housing. African Americans “made it work” by congregating in their own church, persevering in their own educational goals, operating their own businesses, and owning their own homes. Using largely oral history collections, this article argues that the racism was part of Portland life as it was elsewhere, albeit less visible, and that African Americans found subtle but creative ways of confronting it. The author earned his B.A. and M.A. at the University of Cologne in Germany and is now a Ph.D. student in History at the University of Maine. For his dissertation, he researches the dialectic between rural sense of belonging and modernization in nineteenth-century Western Maine and the Sauerland in Germany.

It was an old department store, one of the 5 and 10 cent, five and dime stores. I'm not sure which one, S.S. Kresge's or Woolworth's, one of them, that had used 78's that came off of jukeboxes and I don't – I think at that time you could probably buy a new record for 79 cents and they had these for 10 or 15 cent and that's what I would buy. And I got to a place where I knew music, the kind that I liked. I liked all kind, but the kind you couldn't normally buy in Portland. [. . .] Now you can buy almost any kind of music anyplace. But in those days race records – records made by blacks for blacks – you couldn't buy in Maine. But they would come in – these used records would come and I'd pull 'em out.²

THIS STORY of Bob Greene's first record collection holds significance. He was able to express his African-American identity through his choice in music.³ In Portland, where the white majority made the rules and the needs of African Americans outside of their own community were widely ignored, he could not obtain the music that he liked. Despite this, Greene found a way to get his choice of music by finding a loophole in the system at a market directed at and dominated by whites. Instead of giving up and listening to different music, he persisted and stuck to his choice of music which he perceived as representative of African-American culture.

The African-American population of Portland acted in a very similar way. In an environment where they were regarded as part of the landscape and discriminated against mainly out of ignorance of a white majority which silently claimed racial superiority, blacks resisted. Instead of adhering to the low-status position the white majority assigned to them, African Americans redefined what success meant by turning positions with a negative connotation into something positive. They developed strategies to live proud, meaningful, and wholesome lives despite racial discrimination that limited their choice of options. In this they refused to be hampered by their small numbers and were able to benefit from opportunities presented to them. Perseverance, determination, loyalty, creativity, and daring were all qualities that African Americans exhibited in resisting racism. At the same time, they kept the tradition of a distinctly African-American community and identity alive. With their own black community and social network to fall back on, they could survive in a city dominated by its white population. They might not have changed or openly challenged the ways of this white world, but they provided an environment that enabled the next generation to do so and be ready to partake in the national Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.⁴

This study aims to shine a light on the lives of these African Americans of the 1940s and 50s in a New England city where they made up less than one percent of the total population.

	Population of Portland, 1930-1960				
	Total Population	White Population	White Population (%)	African- American Population	African- American Population (%)
1930	70810	70491	99.6	268	0.4
1940	73643	73259	99.5	325	0.4
1950	77634	77246	99.5	340	0.4
1960	72566	72095	99.4	371	0.5

The demographic breakdown between whites and blacks in Portland, ME between 1930 and 1960. Derived from the United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, Population, Vol. 3, Part 1 (Bureau of the Census: Washington D.C., 1930); *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, Population, Vol. 2, Part 3 (Bureau of the Census: Washington D.C., 1940); *Census of Population, 1950*, Vol. 2, Part 19 (Bureau of the Census: Washington D.C., 1950); *Census of Population, 1960*, Vol. 1, Part 21 (Bureau of the Census: Washington D.C., 1960).

Because the African-American population was so much smaller in Portland, racist discrimination was not part of a public discourse like it was in places with bigger black populations in New England. Larger African-American communities, such as Boston or Newport, Rhode Island, were able to take the avenue of political organization, making discrimination a public issue and effecting a change in their everyday lives before the 1960s.⁵ In contrast, the Portland black community, like other similarly small northern New England black communities in Bangor, Maine, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire, lacked the numbers to make the less visible racial discrimination part of a broad public concern. After only insular attempts of political organization throughout the early twentieth century, the 1960s national Civil Rights Movement provided the impetus and support to fuel a broader organization of a movement focused on all of Maine instead of single localities.⁶

Prior to this movement, individuals in Portland opted for ways to work around the limited opportunities created by racism in order to still lead fulfilling and self-determined lives instead of challenging them openly. In other words, despite racial discrimination in education, employment, and housing, African Americans in Portland “made it work.” This study demonstrates the ways African Americans’ agency expressed itself in the face of racial discrimination, improving their everyday lives in different degrees of success. At the same time, it will become obvious that the racism in Portland showed the same basis and same the mechanisms as elsewhere in the country, albeit presenting itself in a less visible and less violent way. Furthermore, the following will relate black Portland’s experiences with other black communities of New England by pointing out their similarities and inconsistencies

The research on African Americans in New England in the twentieth century is still rather limited and therefore only towns where literature exists can be included, such as: Boston; Newport, Rhode Island before the 1930s; New Haven, Connecticut before 1940; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; and Bangor, Maine before 1950.

The following also makes extensive use of oral histories conducted

for previous studies on Portland's African-American community and weaves these into a narrative. This means that most names of Portland residents simply refer to these interview partners in their function as members of the African-American community, even when they went on to more prominent positions in and after the 1960s Civil Rights Movement.

It is important to keep in mind that almost all of these Portland residents were teenagers and young adults in the 1940s and 50s and gained their insights into problems of racial discrimination mainly through their later activism in the 1960s. Thus, there existed two competing views of racial discrimination in Portland before the 1960s. While the younger generation functioned as the driving force behind the Civil Rights Movement in Maine and showed great awareness of the subtle forms of racial discrimination in retrospect, their parent generation at the time largely accepted racism and its consequences as a given and did not broach the issue. Therefore, the voices of the generation active in the Maine Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s made it a point to talk about these issues, causing their large part in this study, while the few recorded voices of their parent generation talk about their daily lives but without focusing on racial discrimination. Instead of seeing this as a limitation, this difference in perspective of contemporaries actually contributes to the thesis of this study that – before the 1960s – issues of racism were not perceived as public matters even in the African-American community. Also, the paucity of recorded voices and other sources for the time before the 1940s makes it hard to make well-founded assumptions beyond this point in time.

Community

“We’ll survive even if there’s only 1 or 2 of us because I have remembered times when Mrs. Nichols [...] used to come go and stoke the fire and she always said ‘the Lord says as long as there’s two gathered together in my name we will always persist and keep it open.’ And there’s a handful of us that think that way still no matter how great the population is or how small.”⁷ In this quote, longtime church member June McKenzie referred to Green Memorial African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Zion church in Portland, the city’s central hub of the African-American community. It shows not only the necessity of this symbol and central institution, but also, more importantly, the need and determination to have an African-American community at all.

As in other New England cities with small black communities, African Americans made it a point – despite their small numbers – to have their own specifically black community with black social relationships, black institutions, and black social events. While not all African Americans of Portland participated in this community, many felt most comfortable among other blacks. As June McKenzie explained as her reason for participating in activities in the A.M.E. Zion Church, “[I]t was [...] having somebody of your own race to relate to.”⁸ Instead of trying to belong to white institutions and attending white social events (as, for example, blacks in Bangor did in attending services of white churches), many African Americans in Portland decided to continue the black community they had been raised in. This community transmitted a distinctly African-American identity by separating itself from the white majority, something that many individual African Americans were otherwise only able to do within their immediate families.⁹

Portland’s black community included members of various origins. While it is difficult to establish numbers for the relevant time frame, it is clear that the black community was comprised of natives, migrants, and immigrants. The biggest faction seems to have been the native Maine population, with some families being able to trace their arrival in the state back several generations. Migrants, the second biggest element of Portland’s black population, came from New England or were “spin-offs” of the Great Migration from the South, a term used by Elgersman Lee describing migrants to Bangor who first came to other places in the region.¹⁰ Most immigrants, the smallest part of the black population, came from nearby places in Canada like New Brunswick or Nova Scotia while others came from former colonies in the Caribbean or from Cape Verde.¹¹ Despite all these different origins, everyone who wanted to could become an active part of the black community. To name only a few, Gwendolyn Hill, hailing from Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, was an active member of the A.M.E. Zion Church and its “Mis-Ter-Ray” club during the 1940s and 1950s; and David A. Dickson and Cyril Durrant, both immigrants from Jamaica, and Thalia Perry, migrant from North Carolina, were involved with the Colored Community Center in the early 1940s. It seems that the Portland black community was open to all and did not exclude other blacks because of their origin.¹² This might have been connected with the small size of the black population and community as well as the resulting necessity for blacks to stick together.¹³

The influx of African Americans into Portland during World War II



First row, left to right: Thomas Ferrante, John Russo, James Bihm, Delmoist Murphy, Michael Ricci, Daniel Thomas, Marvin Gohldt. Second row, left to right: David Yates, Russell Lerman, John Pistoris, Leon Price, Robert Roukey, Bruce Wetherington, Fred Zedon, Benedict Ricci. Third row, left to right: Leonard Cummings, Owen Burgess, Clay Espey, John DiMillo, Richard Bearor, Bob Ross, Vern Howard, Bob Mosley, Bob Greene.

Portland High School Track Team, 1953. Participating in sports teams offered an opportunity for African-American youths to stay in touch with friends in other towns. Sports were also a point of integration with the broader community. This particular image, featured in the 1953 edition of *Totem* (Portland High School's yearbook), features "sleek and supple sprinter" Bob Greene (third row, right) and "loose and limber" Leonard Cummings (third row, left). *Collections of the Maine Historical Society*.

especially showed the willingness of the black community to include newcomers. With black servicemen and shipyard workers settling in Portland, the black population of 325 in 1940 rose dramatically to an estimated 1500 in 1943.¹⁴ Many black families opened their homes to black servicemen and shipyard workers, and black institutions did all they could to make them feel welcome. Local African Americans were involved with the establishment of a Colored Community Center, which opened in March 1942. The Center, along with a subsequent United Service Organizations (USO) club opened in December 1944, provided entertainment for African-American servicemen and shipyard workers. A restaurant called the "Green Lantern Grill," run by the local Thomas family, served as a third public place where locals and newcomers would intermingle, and the Green Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church included newcomers as members. These social connections sometimes resulted in marriages between newcomers and locals, which speaks to the good relations between the two groups. June McKenzie, a teenager mingled with black newcomers at the time, later summarized the attitude of the Port-

land black community towards newcomers during World War II: “[I]t was nice to [...] see black faces now and there where before you didn’t see any.”¹⁵

Taking this openness into consideration, the importance of specifically African-American social relationships and networks in the community and to other black communities comes as no surprise. In family matters such as child-rearing, blacks would help each other out. As very often mothers had to work one or more jobs to finance their families’ resistance to racism in education and housing, they had to be able to count on members of their family or the community to look after their children. Thomasina Cummings was a mother of six and worked several jobs at the same time, taking her away from her home for most of the day. Still, her son Leonard Cummings later in life said that “[t]he thing that got us through as young people was the fact that we had family.”¹⁶ Next to family the Cummings also had “‘Aunt Mary Rollins,’ a dear and cherished friend of the family” to provide childcare in the absence of their mother.¹⁷ Similar to the Cummings family, Florence E. Nichols lived with her niece Sara Adams and husband Dennard Adams to help raise her four grandnieces and -nephews.¹⁸ Taken alongside other examples like these, the central role of the African-American family and community in raising children becomes apparent.

The social links of the black community in Portland to the black community in Bangor are another example of the importance placed on specifically black social relationships. Ties between black families of Portland and Bangor, approximately 130 miles to the north, were maintained by cordial visits. This undertaking proved more difficult than one would expect today, as transportation was not readily available. Bob Greene remembered that very few blacks owned their own cars in the 1940s. He, a native of Portland, and Gerald Talbot, a native of Bangor, remembered that they were able to visit friends in each other’s towns while there with High School sports teams. Gerald Talbot would also hitchhike to Portland together with a friend, as he had met his future wife Anita in Portland. Besides this, the railroad connected the two places and blacks working on the trains would utilize this connection for their visits. Their memories of their own as well as of other families’ experiences corroborated the statement made by Price and Talbot that “[v]isiting between families and black communities at a great distance from each other was a norm for blacks in Maine [...]. Friendships were often formed [...] or couples met and married.”¹⁹

The importance of explicitly black social relationships is also emphasized by the existence and great anticipation of the annual Fourth

of July picnics, which served as a reunion for Maine blacks. Eugene Jackson remembered the time before the picnic every summer. "The July 4th picnics were one of the biggest events of the summer season. [...] [F]or weeks everybody would ask 'Are you going to the picnic?'"²⁰ The big attraction of this event was not only that there would be a picnic with good food and fun activities at Sebago Lake, right outside of Portland, but that there would be a mass of African Americans from many places in Maine as well as from further away. Bob Greene described the event:

[I]t was a reunion. Anybody, and we're talking basically blacks, if you moved away, whether my mother or my family or my aunts, you always knew that you came home for the Fourth of July picnic that everybody else from around the country would be home. You'd see everybody at the same time. [...] Sometimes [we were] coming in from Kansas City just for the picnic. And my aunt that lived in Boston would be here and the ones from New York, the cousins that had moved way away. They would all come home.²¹

The picnic and the dance hosted at a local establishment the night before were a highly valued chance to socialize with old friends, most of whom you would only be able to meet at this event each year. Taking into consideration how far some were willing to travel to attend the picnic and the pleasant memories many blacks from Portland have about this event, it becomes clear that this social occasion of a great number of African Americans congregating was worth the effort and was very dear to members of the black community of Portland.²²

The institution which provided a regular social event in the African-American community was Green Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church. While a common occurrence in New England cities with bigger black populations, not every smaller African-American community congregated around a black church like Portland or nearby Portsmouth. The similarly small black community of pre-World War II Bangor, for example, did not have a black church but instead dispersed over different denomination white churches and had all-black social events apart from the church. Contrastingly, Portland's A.M.E. Zion Church was connected with almost all activities going on in the black community, which led very active church member of June McKenzie to say: "[W]e don't have per se a black community. The church is our community."²³ Being the successor of the Abyssinian Congregational Church, the black church dominant for the better part of the 19th century, the A.M.E. Zion Church had its beginnings in the 1890s. The building of the A.M.E. Zion church was erected in 1914 and along with its congregation is still present today. With

this long tradition as foundation, the A.M.E. Zion Church naturally was the hub of Portland's black community in the 1940s and 50s. In this it was not only a religious institution, but also a cultural one, hosting many kinds of social events and activities.²⁴

As with black churches elsewhere in New England, the most basic social function of the A.M.E. Zion Church was to give African Americans a place and occasion to congregate and socialize. The significance of this opportunity was made clear by Harold Richardson, who said that blacks working for rich whites could "socializ[e] with some of their own peers."²⁵ Eugene Jackson described the typical situation after Sunday mass:

[I]t was a gathering place. Somehow particularly in inclement weather people felt that they should go to church. And where [people] probably didn't visit each other's houses during the week, you did meet at church. And they had a rectory there that probably after the service there was getting coffee or donuts or cake so it was a social occasion too. And people either planned events to come or what they were going to do. You talked about your family and then the younger ones, or where you were going or what you were going to do. And everybody enjoyed the conversation.²⁶

While most aspects of the lives of African Americans involved dealing with white people, the A.M.E. Zion Church provided a welcome chance to be with only blacks.

This premise was continued in extensions of the church like clubs and social events. Next to different choirs for different age groups that held weekly practices, there was the "Mis-Ter-Ray" club, an exclusive women's club established in 1923. It hosted dances, such as on the Third of July mentioned earlier, as well as tea parties and other events, often to raise money for the church. Anita Talbot remembered that the club also "did a lot of things for the young people in the black community."²⁷ At their dances, such as the "Harlem Nite Club" hosted in South Portland in 1942, black young adults could also attend and have a chance to congregate and have a good time. At dances, choir rehearsals, Sunday school or Christian Endeavor Society meetings, adolescent African Americans could look for suitable partners. Harold Richardson remembered that he and his friends would "see that we could meet the young girls," at these events.²⁸ The black clubs and events at the A.M.E. Zion Church did not only play a vital social role for the black community, it also gave the black youth attending a sense of belonging and identity. "That's where we got most of our [African-American] identity. It was on that one Sunday at Church," as Anita Talbot described it.²⁹



Senior Superlatives

MOST VALUABLE

Thomas Merrill and Alice Savage won this title with little difficulty. Others receiving votes were John Huston, William Greenlaw, and Gladys Ginsburg.

MOST POPULAR

Joanne McFarland and Leonard Cummings came out on top in a very close contest. Trailing closely behind were Gloria Douglas, Florence Stackhouse, William Greenlaw, and Joseph Marinello.

“Most Popular” Senior Superlative, Portland High School, 1953. Unlike many schools in the United States during the same period, racial boundaries seemed not to play a significant role in the social life of African American students, nor was there any official segregation in the Portland school system. This image features Leonard Cummings, voted most popular boy at Portland High School in 1953. *Collections of the Maine Historical Society.*

This specifically African-American identity was also apparent in the cultural traits, such as music and food, of church events. The A.M.E. Zion Church made it a point to engage popular African-American musicians to give concerts in Portland. Tenor Roland Hayes came to Portland in 1937 and 1948, and famous contralto Marian Anderson gave much-lauded concerts in 1938, 1944 and 1961. Another typically African-American cultural trait very visible to the public was the monthly chicken dinners. In opposition to the bean suppers otherwise prevalent in New England, African Americans of the A.M.E. Zion Church, much like other black churches, put a dish on the menu they thought of as their own: fried chicken. As these dinners were a way to raise money to pay the bills and mortgage of the church, tickets were sold not only to blacks, but also to whites. Harold Richardson remembered that his mother was involved with the sale of tickets for the chicken dinners. “She would go to these department heads in City Hall, and the different own-

ers of businesses, and dispose of her tickets and they would distribute them out to their employees.”³⁰ As there were times when the dinners were a great success, it becomes clear that an African-American identity was not only transmitted to the blacks participating, but was also very visible, even palpable (and seemingly not disagreeable) to whites.³¹

The African-American identity and its place in Portland were not only represented positively by the A.M.E. Zion Church, but were also defended when attacked. Bob Greene remembered one particular instance where the church challenged the negative image of African Americans in newspapers. These would usually portray blacks only in a negative context, as in this case with him and his friend Leonard Cummings, both very successful high school athletes:

“One of the newspaper writers called Lenny and myself the Gold Dust Twins. [...] [A]pparently the Gold Dust Twins were two black stereotyped characters in comics or something. So there was an uproar about us being called the Gold Dust Twins with this kind of connection. I remember that the writer ended up writing a letter of apology to my mother and I’m sure to Len’s mother. [...] I think the minister took the lead in battles like that for the community.”³²

While it is important to keep in mind that – in the description of Gerald Talbot – “it depend[ed] on the minister coming in, what his philosophy was, [...] what his activities were that benefitted [*sic*] the community,”³³ it can be said that the A.M.E. Zion Church and its community were the bedrock for African Americans in Portland especially when racism flared up more openly than usual.³⁴

Education

In his 1943 study “Patterns of Negro Segregation,” Charles Johnson assumed that the most telling factor giving information about race relations in a certain region was the degree of racial segregation in schools. Taking this perspective, Portland would have seemed like a role model for the nation, as on the surface there was no racial segregation in Portland schools. In contrast to larger New England cities with larger populations of African Americans like Boston where de-facto racial segregation in schools was largely prevalent and received public attention in the 1950s, in smaller cities like Bangor and Portland nothing seemed awry: the very few black students went to the same schools as the white ones; there were no official separate structures; and even in the students’ social lives, racial

boundaries mostly did not play a role. Black students were also well-integrated and sometimes very successful in the schools' clubs and sports. Bob Greene, who attended Portland schools in the 1940s and early 1950s, said in reference to discrimination which took place later in his life: "When you're young nobody cares."³⁵ Nevertheless, beneath this rosy surface impression, there were certain racist elements at work, especially when it came to interracial romantic relationships and attendance of institutions of post-secondary education.³⁶

Perceived as a primary stage for romance, African-American teenagers experienced discrimination when it came to interracial dancing. Mary Jane Cummings remembered that, even though classes and school dances were mixed, "there was not the inter-racial dancing okay."³⁷ Dance lessons that took place in gym class were a reminder that there were racist elements at work in Portland, as in the case of Eugene Jackson, a 1941 graduate of Portland High School: "I can remember when we started to learn to dance. And I know in my gym class there weren't any black girls so therefore I [...] didn't participate in learning to dance because somebody would always frown upon mixed dancing at that time."³⁸ Similarly, his classmate Harold Richardson was also excluded from dance lessons by being selected to operate the records. He too was the only black in his gym class. While this example of segregation was new to black teenagers, it seems that for white adults monitoring them in the 1940s and 1950s segregation in connection to dancing was understood.³⁹

This form of segregation was extended to the dating scene, albeit seemingly with a certain double standard. For African-American teenage girls, the small number of blacks in Portland created a problem, which in Barbara Nichols' words sounded simple: "There were no blacks in my class, so I didn't date."⁴⁰ Bob Greene talked about accompanying Beverly Dodge to her senior prom in 1952 even though he was not romantically involved with her. One reason for this arrangement, he explained, was that "there were so few black men around."⁴¹ It seems that it was taboo that black girls would date white boys. For black boys, the norm also appears to have been to date black girls, with the significant difference that the option of dating white girls seems to have been available, as the story about Bob Greene's time of first love interests shows. "I think I dated all of the black [...] girls in my age group and I dated several of the white girls of that age group during that period of time. [There] was, again, not a whole lot said, not a whole lot thought about it."⁴² This description of the African-American dating scene in Portland gains more significance when the discourse of the time about intermarriage and race-mixing is considered.

Like anywhere else in the country, many members of both the white and black communities in New England frowned upon intermarriage and race-mixing. Many whites were generally afraid of African-American sexuality as threatening the status quo of racial separation and white dominance. From this perspective interracial dancing, an activity associated with a sense of intimacy and possibly sexual advances, was seen as a breach in the racial order and was therefore taboo. As African-American children entered puberty, they were perceived as sexually mature enough to be included in the white fear of black sexuality. Therefore African-American teenagers attending New England mixed schools were often excluded from school activities such as swimming or dancing, as it has been already observed for Portland High School. The opposition of whites in Portland against race-mixing is exemplified by an unidentified white man, who proclaimed: "I object to [intermarriage] because they belong to two different races. [...] Their characteristics are different, their likes and dislikes, their nature."⁴³ As Gunny Mydral, St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Clayton have noted, African Americans in the northern U.S. in reaction to this white discourse developed their own racial pride and would also object to intermarriage and race-mixing.⁴⁴ This development in the North also reached Portland, as told by Anita Talbot, wife of Gerald Talbot: "I'm not interested in mixing with Caucasians socially. [...] Many Caucasians think we want to intermarry with them. A lot of Negro families don't want intermarriage either."⁴⁵ The effect of this discourse was informal social control by whites and blacks on interracial romantic relationships. As it becomes clear that the biracial anti-race-mixing discourse prevalent in the North did extend to Portland, it is also highly likely that the informal social control on interracial romantic relationships occurred in Portland.⁴⁶

In the light of this assumption, the significance of the Portland interracial dating scene becomes clearer. Among other factors, some black teenagers were influenced more by the assumed social control on interracial dating so that they would either establish strictly black circles of friends or attempt to pass as white. Others saw and partook in the possibility of black boys dating white girls, revealing resistance against the dominant discourse against race-mixing. Bob Greene and the white girls he dated expressed agency in dating whoever they saw fit without being impressed by norms that kept the races apart.⁴⁷

Turning to the attendance of institutions of post-secondary education, college enrollment and completion of Mainers in the 1940s and 50s was overall low, as the 1957 figure of 4.8% of Mainers who completed

four years of college or more demonstrates.⁴⁸ This was even more the case for African Americans from Maine, as many of them were either discouraged, refused, or stopped by financial difficulties from pursuing a college education. Many of these obstacles stemmed from racial discrimination.

In high school, African-American teenagers were either not counseled enough or discouraged from taking up higher education. This practice seems to have been prevalent in many New England cities throughout the 1940s and 50s, as for example Boston, where it sparked public activism.⁴⁹

In Portland, this continuing practice remained largely hidden from the public eye until the 1960s. A 1964 survey of the African-American population in Portland mentioned that counseling took place infrequently and that some parents were not being informed about which educational paths were available to their children. Willard Callender, research chairman of this survey, later added in an interview: "That was a big thing. What councilors [*sic*] tell kids."⁵⁰ In the case of Barbara Nichols, who was a black teenager in Portland at the time, there was guidance but a discouraging kind. She recalled: "My guidance counselor talked to me about being an LPN (licensed practical nurse). [...] As a B student, she should have encouraged me instead to be in a college program."⁵¹ The undertone of this discouragement was that blacks could not or should not go to college. It becomes clear that counseling of African-American teenagers was neglected because of the racist assumption that they did not need it as they would not or could not attend institutions of higher education.⁵²

In fact, African Americans in smaller New England cities like Portland, Bangor, or Portsmouth could enroll in college and university programs but would yet again face racist attitudes if they were studying to become teachers. Even though there were not enough teachers being trained in Maine to supply its demand even up until 1960, according to Richard Condon, African Americans were mostly barred from this profession. While this was true for most of New England, bigger cities like Boston represented a small exception, as there were a limited number of black teachers (amounting to 0.5% of all teachers employed in the city). As for Portland, Harold Richardson was one of the black high school graduates affected by barring African Americans from becoming teachers. "Dr. Bailey [from Gorham Normal School] came to Portland High School and he interviewed me and he stated to me that 'Harold, you could go to Gorham [Normal] School, but you cannot practice teaching in the state

of Maine. And I said ‘Why?’ and he paused, he said ‘You don’t realized [*sic*] it, but that you’re colored – they’re not accepted, colored student teachers or teachers at this time.’ And he said ‘You’d have to go south.’”⁵³ Other sources lead to the same basic premise that especially male African Americans would not be hired as teachers in Maine, and therefore very few bothered to get trained.⁵⁴

Financial difficulties were another obstacle for African Americans wanting to pursue a college degree. As employment options of most African-American families in Portland were limited, it was economically “close to impossible”⁵⁵ for most parents to send their children to college, as the before mentioned survey on African Americans in Portland described it. Of the few black Maine students enrolled in college, some could only finish their degrees with interruptions necessary to earn enough money to pay tuition fees. Leonard Cummings, for example, was not able to finance and finish his studies even while working at the same time.⁵⁶

Despite these challenges connected to racial discrimination, some African Americans of Portland overcame these obstacles and earned college degrees. A large portion of these did so at out-of-state universities, such as Roland Richardson, Beverly Bowens, or Eugene Baxter. Others would attend colleges in Maine, the most prominent example of which is the Dickson family. David A. Dickson, a janitor, and his wife Mary, Maine’s “Mother of the Year” in 1950, provided college education for their five very successful children, four of which attended Bowdoin College in Maine. This example is also quite telling, as all five children had to move away from Maine to succeed in their respective professions. One of the very few African Americans to defy the Maine convention of banning blacks from becoming teachers was Ann Searcy. She graduated from Gorham State Teachers College in Portland in 1948, just a few years after Harold Richardson would have, and then taught school in Portland for twenty-five years. It is apparent that some African Americans had the means and determination to overcome the racial barriers prevalent in Portland and with that resisted the dominant racist discourse that blacks could not gain degrees in higher education.⁵⁷

The foundation for this resistance was laid by parents who saw education as means to provide their children with a better life than their own. Next to providing the funds for their children’s education, often by both parents working one or two jobs, studying and getting ahead in life were highly esteemed qualities in the upbringing of many blacks from Portland. Other than the statement “You have to be better than everybody

	<p>RICCHIO, HELEN MILDRED Basketball, 2; Glee Club, 1. <i>My Memory:</i> Junior Prom. "And that's why the leopard's eyes both pop!"—Uncle Remus.</p> <p>RICHARDSON, CLIFFORD ASTLEY Cross Country, 2, co-captain, 3, 4; Track, 2, co-captain, 3, 4; Cadets, 2, 3; Basketball, 1. <i>My Memory:</i> The first race I won for the school. Time will never erase this harrier's deeds . . . but if it should, "Kip" will be only too glad to recall them for you.</p>
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Candid image from the 1947 issue of *Totem*, Portland High School's yearbook; the caption reads "Watch the birdie, huh? . . . cutting in our racket, eh?" Although dating relationships were viewed with scrutiny and some forms of personal interaction were limited, they were not unheard of. This was particularly in the case of an African American boy dating a white girl. *Collections of the Maine Historical Society.*

else,” so familiar to June McKenzie, parents had ways of bestowing their high esteem for education on their children.⁵⁸ Instead of punishing them for bad behavior, her father made them read poetry or books about black history. Bob Greene, who would later become a journalist, also grew up in an atmosphere where learning was always present and sometimes enforced: “I remember for Christmas one year, [. . .] my mother gave me a typewriter [. . .] and she told [me] that she had bought in on [. . .] credit. And she said: ‘If you don’t know how to type by New Year’s, I’m taking it back.’ And by Christmas night I could type with all ten fingers.”⁵⁹ Parents consciously resisted the racist assumption that blacks would not need higher education as they would supposedly end up in low-skilled jobs anyway. By instilling the great value of education in their children they sought to open up opportunities in life that they had been denied because of racial discrimination.⁶⁰

Employment

When I lived in Portland, most of the black people worked in domestic service. Those of us that had a trade we probably found a job but whether we would be temporary we didn’t know. [. . .] [T]here weren’t many jobs available. The women ran elevators or they were matrons for the ladies rooms and so when the young were coming out of high school most of them or those that didn’t go to college, there was very few of them, they made plans to leave the state where they other family members or friends working and they hoped they could attain jobs. But there was really nothing to look forward to for a black when I came out of high school in 1941.⁶¹

This assessment by Eugene Jackson sums up the employment situation of the majority of African Americans in Portland until the 1960s. As in other New England cities, almost all African Americans in Portland were employed in unskilled labor or other low-paid jobs. From 1900 to 1950, around 90% of all black Mainers were employed in semi-skilled or menial labor. This figure dropped to approximately 80% in 1950. Nevertheless, this did not mean a significant improvement for the marginalized economic situation of black Mainers, as their salaries were significantly lower than those of white Mainers. If African Americans from Portland did not move out of state, as many black Mainers did because of the state’s weak economy, they were most likely employed in low-paying, “traditional negro occupations” (in the words of Callender’s survey), such as “domestic services, porter, janitor, businesses centering

on personal services to other negroes, [*sic*] and unskilled labor positions.”⁶²

The situation of married black women in this was especially strained, as more often than not they had to work one or even two jobs to make ends meet. Opposite to many of their white counterparts, black women had to work out of economic necessity. Also, their families’ resistance to racial discrimination in employment as well as housing caused further financial pressure, as sending their children to college or buying their own home required sufficient funds. There are several examples for wives and mothers having to work as cooks, domestic servants, matrons, elevator operators, or cleaning ladies often at the same time.⁶³

The discriminatory practices in employment which created limited job choices for African Americans began right after high school. After being very well-integrated and socially close with many whites during their school years, Mary Jane Cummings remembered “an invisible line” when “the black kids went one way, and our [white] classmates ventured out into the world so to speak or the business world.”⁶⁴ The experience of June McKenzie graduating high school shows a wide array of important points to make about the discriminatory practices in employment.

[W]hen I graduated from high school I figured I can get a job because I took business courses and I was a pretty good student. And then when I went to get them it was always ‘no vacancies’ or ‘somebody, we just hired somebody’ or ‘I’m sorry we don’t hire colored.’ [. . .] but you could get the job running elevator or working at somebodies [*sic*] home but not in public.⁶⁵

Job refusals were either made covertly by finding a non-offensive excuse or overtly by stating racist practices of employers. It did not matter what kind of qualifications African Americans had, they were almost always assigned to jobs deemed appropriate for blacks. The result of these racist practices was that most blacks would not even apply for jobs other than the ones assigned to them by whites, as – in the words of black Portlander Eugene Jackson looking back – they “knew it was just a waste of time.”⁶⁶

One reason why African Americans would only be hired in “negro occupations” was the low degree of social intimacy with whites in these jobs. All of these jobs were in positions invisible to the public, leading to the assumption that employers were afraid they too could be affected by the racist stigma attached to African Americans. Similar to the situation concerning interracial dating, whites used stereotypes portraying blacks as unclean, carrying diseases, and overall inferior to vindicate racial discrimination. The example of Barbara Nichols helps to illustrate this

assumption. She applied for a job wrapping Christmas presents at the major department store in Portland called Porteous Mitchell & Braun together with a white friend. While Barbara was told that there were no openings and was subsequently offered a job in the stockroom, her white friend was hired to wrap presents. The task of wrapping and in that process also touching the gifts of white customers was deemed too intimate and representative by the employers of the department store. Working in the stockroom, distant from and invisible to the public eye, was appropriate as it did not challenge the feeling of white superiority.⁶⁷

One factor influencing the chance of African Americans getting better or even public jobs was their skin color. What was true in many places in the northern U.S. was also true for Portland, where African Americans with lighter skin color had overall better job opportunities than blacks with darker skin. Donald Fisher had a job as an errand boy and later sales clerk in a jewelry store, something which he attributed to his light skin color. Gerald Talbot obtained jobs because he was mistaken for white or another non-black ethnic group. The general phenomenon has been described by Herring as skin color determining the opportunity structure or social stratification outcomes in areas such as education, employment, or income in African-American communities.⁶⁸ According to Margaret Hunter and Gunnar Myrdal, this led to a paradox where light skin blacks were able to advance in the business world but at the same time their ethnic legitimacy and group loyalty would be questioned by other blacks. This then could lead to intraracial discrimination as in the case of Gerald Talbot, who was told by other blacks: "You really don't know how it feels to be black."⁶⁹ It becomes obvious how the discriminatory preference of whites for light-skin blacks in Portland also influenced how blacks saw each other and could cause intraracial discrimination.⁷⁰

The most obvious way of resisting racism on the job market for African Americans in Portland was to exchange information on who would hire them, even if it was for low-paying jobs. As African Americans frequently ran into racist hiring policies, information on where positions were open and if blacks would be hired were important. Like in other New England cities, African Americans would exchange information on job openings via their church community or other personal networks. June McKenzie remembered that the bulletin of Green Memorial A.M.E. Zion church also served this function. Charles Edward Cummings worked as a redcap at Union Station and got two of his brothers and one brother-in-law to work the same job beside him. Edie Thomas co-owned and operated the Thomas House, a rooming house, and the Green Lantern

restaurant in the early 1940s. There she would act like an employment agency for black newcomers and natives in Portland. Using what networks they had, African Americans in Portland showed loyalty towards each other by providing information on job openings.⁷¹

The difference in jobs available to African Americans during this period resulted in a different set of social norms from the white population in regards to specific occupations. Turning work regarded as menial by whites into a position of prestige was how black railway porters working at Portland's Union Station resisted the discriminatory job market, for example. Whereas most whites working in a low-status job such as a railway porter, would be insecure about their social standing among whites, blacks were kept in this job by racial discrimination and did not have to worry about social status among other blacks. Even though Drake and Cayton suggested this theory when writing about the "Black Metropolis" Chicago in 1945, it also appears to have applied to Portland. Many black railway porters had a different, more positive perspective on their job than their white counterparts. Leonard Cummings said about his uncle, Charles E. "Eddie" Cummings, who was a redcap at Union Station for fifty years, that "he made the best of it with what was available to him."⁷² At the end of Eddie's life, the *Portland Evening Express* wrote that "Union Station wouldn't have been Union Station without Eddie,"⁷³ and the *Portland Press Herald* called him "a magnificent man."⁷⁴ Cummings was not only resourceful but also left an impression on people as being a valued emblem of personality and perseverance. Bob Greene remembered a story that speaks to the esteem and trustworthiness that black railroad porters enjoyed in the Portland black community: "I was seven years old, my parents put me on a train to Denver alone. [...] Aunt Bebe and Uncle Mac [...] knew all of the porters on the train so somebody was watching me all the way."⁷⁵ Their valued position in the black community shows how African-American railroad porters of Portland countered the racist assumptions of whites about blacks in low-status jobs.⁷⁶

Another way of resisting racial discrimination in employment was to become self-employed and start one's own independent business. For African Americans in Portland, the role model for having a successful business was Moses Green. Until his death in 1942, Green operated a shoeshine stand at Portland's Union Station, was involved in the real estate business, became one of the wealthiest African Americans of Portland, and was so well-respected and generous that after his death the A.M.E. Zion Church was rededicated in his name.⁷⁷ In the 1940s and 50s, others followed in his footsteps and had their own shoeshine stands. Another

prominent business was Kippy's Cleaning Service, started in 1947 by brothers Harold and Clifford "Kippy" Richardson. The brothers had numerous commercial and residential cleaning jobs all over Maine, most prominently in the home of actress Bette Davis in Cape Elizabeth. As a sign of how busy their business was, it is important to note that they each worked up to eighty hours a week and had up to twenty-three employees. Another self-employed business man was Jim Searcy, who had his own gas station in the late 1950s. It becomes clear that even if the work of African-American businesses might have been of a lower status, they still prospered and defied the low social status assigned to blacks in Portland.⁷⁸

A rooming house and a barbershop operated by African Americans also contributed to black resistance against economic marginalization by providing services that were denied to African Americans in Portland. As in many places all over the United States, African-American travelers had trouble finding hotels in Portland – the biggest city in the state known as "Vacationland" – which would accept their patronage. This opened up an economic niche for local blacks. Edie and Benjamin Thomas owned and operated a rooming house next to Portland's Union Station which provided services for black railroad porters and travelers as well as servicemen and shipyard workers during World War II. "It was a way of making money and getting ahead," as Norma Readdy, niece of Edie and Benjamin Thomas, put it.⁷⁹ The rooming house had a monopoly in Portland, suggested by the fact that the "Thomas House Tourist Home" was the only listing for Portland in the Negro Motorist Green Book, a nationally-distributed travel guide listing businesses catering to African Americans.

Similar to being the only hotel for blacks in town, Harold Hill was the only African-American barber. In line with what has been observed for all of the United States in the 1940s and 50s, barbershops in Portland were de-facto segregated. African-American youngsters at the time, Bob Greene and Leonard Cummings experienced this first hand:

The only time I was ever turned down for anything [. . .] I went into the barbershop at the Union station. Len and I went in together and asked for a haircut. It was a white barber and he told us that he [. . .] didn't know how to cut our hair, but he said [. . .] he knew somebody that could and he gave me the name and address of my cousin [Harold Hill].⁸⁰

The monopoly of Harold Hill on barbering for blacks in Portland in the 1950s and 1960s was one cause for his success. As Gerald Talbot de-

scribed it: "Everybody went to him."⁸¹ As with Edie and Benjamin Thomas, Harold Hill not only resisted racial discrimination in employment and public accommodations, providing integral services for the black community became a key part of their economic success.⁸²

Another business sector which saw black participation in Portland was the real estate business. The Eastern Real Estate Company was an African-American Portland business and stock company in existence from 1911 until 1983. In the years between 1941 and 1959, this business was operated by a set of five to eight African-American directors and officers, managing up to five properties in the Portland area. The income for these directors was raised, for example, in December 1947 to \$3, and to \$5 for officers, when for comparison the monthly rent for an apartment on Park Avenue in the West End of Portland was \$20. This might not have been a substantial but it was a welcome addition to the limited income of directors and officers who worked as domestic servants, hotel maids, mail clerks, railroad porters, or linemen. With most of their tenants and business partners being white, it seems the longevity and relative success of the Eastern Real Estate Company did not disturb these amicable race relations. Further, it showed whites in Portland that blacks could do well for themselves in the predominantly white real estate business.⁸³

Turning their African-American identity into a business advantage, several restaurants in Portland were owned by African Americans who capitalized on making their image and food explicitly Southern or even African-American. Much like Boston establishments such as the "Southern Dining Room" or "Slade's Restaurant," Leola (Marshall) Black, originally from Shaw, Mississippi, owned and operated Portland's "Marshall's Southern Restaurant" for fifty years, starting in the 1940s.⁸⁴ Bob Greene described the food there as "soul food."⁸⁵ In addition to Leola Black, Helen and Arthur Roberts had a successful restaurant which served Southern food such as fried chicken.⁸⁶ "The Plantation," a 1930s restaurant at the Portland-Scarborough airport, called itself "a little bit of Harlem" and served telling dishes such as "Southern Fried Chicken" and "Baked Virginia Ham."⁸⁷

Keeping in mind the effect of African Americans from the South taking their food traditions with them in their Great Migration, all of these Southern foods might also be interpreted as part of an African-American identity in the North. As mentioned above, fried chicken specifically seems to have been an African-American specialty in the minds of whites and blacks in the northern United States. As opposed to Boston restaurants which specifically catered to African Americans,

however, Portland restaurants could not have survived on an all-black clientele as there were not enough blacks in Portland and thus whites must have frequented these establishments as well. The black proprietors of Portland restaurants not only resisted racism by having successful businesses, they also expressed resistance to the dominant white culture by fueling their success with an image and food perceived as part of an African-American identity.⁸⁸

Housing

“There’s a definite geography to where blacks lived in Portland.”⁸⁹ This geography, referenced by Willard Callender, was attested to by several members of the African-American community. Donald Fisher gave a concise summary: “[M]ost of the blacks were either at the east end which was Munjoy Hill, or the West End down by the railroad station or Union Station. Very few in between. Then on the outskirts and the suburbs – forget about it. None at all.”⁹⁰ According to Stan Clough, this pattern had persisted at least since the early 1900s. In Portland, the areas of the city available for African Americans to live appear to have been slightly more restrictive than, for example, in Bangor. There, African Americans clustered together in what became known as the Parker Street neighborhood but still were able to find a home in any ward of the city. The larger African-American population of Newport showed patterns of black residency similar to smaller Bangor with clusters in distinct neighborhoods, most notably West Broadway. Moreso than other New England cities, Boston’s black population of 23,000 in 1940 and 63,000 in 1960 had distinctly African-American neighborhoods instead of mere clustering at different times throughout the twentieth century. Prominent neighborhoods of this type include Beacon Hill, the South End, Roxbury, and North Dorchester.

Other factors related to race also restricted patterns of African-American populations in New England during this period. While in parts of the New Haven, Connecticut, the black middle class moved out of the inner city into the suburbs, partaking in a trend of white Americans all over the northern United States beginning in the 1920s. Portland African Americans remained in ethnically mixed neighborhoods on the Portland peninsula as they could not afford the expensive rents elsewhere due to limited employment options. In his 1944 study, Gunnar Myrdal also mentioned this factor along with what he called “ethnic attachment” where blacks would “cluster together for convenience.”⁹¹

Considering the tight-knit community patterns around the A.M.E. Zion Church, for example, this explanation can be seen as another factor influencing the housing patterns of African Americans in Portland.⁹²

The primary reason for blacks being confined to live in certain sections of Portland, however, was that whites did not want them anywhere else. This goal was achieved by the tradition of real estate agents and landlords simply refusing to let African Americans rent or buy housing outside of designated areas. Making clear how this tradition was realized, Stephen Halpert quoted a real estate agent as saying: "You know how it is, if you have a [Jewish or black] client [...] you don't take him to Broad Cove [Portland suburb], you just know as a real estate agent, you don't take him around to those places cause he can't rent those."⁹³ Landlords would use similar discriminatory practices. When landlords realized that an African American wanted to rent their apartment after talking on the phone or after discovering a light-skin black was in fact African-American, they would resort to seemingly non-offensive or sometimes obviously racist ways of refusing to rent to blacks. Landlords would feign that the apartment was no longer available, or refuse because the neighbors supposedly did not like blacks living in their neighborhood. As reported by Gerald Talbot, some would straight-out say: "We don't rent to Negroes. And we won't rent to Negroes. So you might as well get out of my neighborhood."⁹⁴ It becomes clear that it was a conscious strategy of white real estate agents and landlords to keep blacks from living in certain parts of Portland.⁹⁵

This strategy was not confined to people in the real estate business, but was based on a broader racist sentiment shared by the majority of whites in Portland when it came to living near African Americans. In this light, the racist practices of real estate agents might also have been related to fears of property values dropping when blacks moved into a white neighborhood. Referring to all of the U.S., Drake and Cayton offer an explanation for this in that for whites "the *thought* of having Negroes as neighbors [was] very distasteful."⁹⁶ This seems to have also been the case in Portland, as in this extreme example described by June McKenzie: "I remember when my house was burning my next door neighbors they were a French family and the man always said 'Good morning' like that. But when my house was burning he said 'I hope it burns down' and I heard him. And it was just such a devastation."⁹⁷ Others became more active, starting neighborhood petitions against a black family moving there, or even throwing a stone through the window of a black tenant. While violence was the exception, it still becomes apparent that when it

came to being neighbors with blacks, racism among many whites was a reality.⁹⁸

White racist stereotypes about African Americans were magnified by their own racial discrimination in housing. This problem was summarized well by Portland resident Donald Fisher: “[Because of racial discrimination] [y]ou couldn’t get decent housing and you had to accept inferior. Then the general [. . .] white public, would look at you and say, ‘Oh, they don’t care anyway. That’s where they wanted to live in those run down places.’”⁹⁹ This assumption of whites would then start a vicious circle where results of racial discrimination, e.g. African Americans living in substandard housing, would cause stereotypes about blacks not taking proper care of their houses, which were then ignorantly used to vindicate further discrimination in housing.¹⁰⁰

The Eastern Real Estate Company operated by only African Americans appears to be the most obvious place to look for resistance against discriminatory practices in housing. While blacks were discriminated against in housing in Portland, the Eastern Real Estate Company could only do little to alleviate their situation. In the seven- to nine-dwelling units the company owned between 1941 and 1959, most tenants were white. The only black tenant that could be identified was Earle C. Ruby, whose family had lived at 374 Park Avenue from at least 1920 until after the 1950s. While the company directors were rather flexible with most tenants about the payment of back rent, they granted Earle Ruby an exceptionally long payment plan that lasted at least throughout the 1940s.¹⁰¹

The Eastern Real Estate Company was only marginally able to break up prevalent housing patterns of African Americans in Portland, as all but one property was situated near the West End. In January of 1949 the company bought a single house at 165 Woodlawn Avenue in North Deering, a neighborhood of Portland assumed to contain exclusively white inhabitants. As the Eastern Real Estate Company merely owned the property while tenants appear to have been whites, the impact on racial housing patterns was minimal.¹⁰² Overall, the small population of African Americans in Portland can be assumed to have been one of the reasons why the company had to focus on white clientele to stay in business and therefore was not able to play a decisive part in the resistance against racial discrimination in housing.¹⁰³

The most common strategy against racial discrimination in rental housing during the 1940s and 1950s was to own a home. As many black families had lived in Portland for generations, it was not uncommon for

Table 2:
Home Ownership in Portland

	African-American		
	Total Occupied Dwelling Units	Owner Occupied Dwelling Units	Owner Occupied Dwelling Units (%)
1930	71	17	23.9
1940	94	16	17.0
1950	86	36	41.8
	White		
	Total Occupied Dwelling Units	Owner Occupied Dwelling Units	Owner Occupied Dwelling Units (%)
1930	17393	6097	35.0
1940	19525	5971	30.5
1950	23012	8563	37.2

Table showing the increase in home ownership among African Americans in Portland following 1940. Derived from United States Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Population, Vol. 6 (Bureau of the Census: Washington D.C., 1930); Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Housing, Vol. 2, Part 3 (Bureau of the Census: Washington D.C., 1940); Census of Housing, 1950, Vol. 1, Part 3 (Bureau of the Census: Washington D.C., 1950). The 1960 census did not differentiate between nonwhites and can therefore not provide a conclusive result.

them to own their homes and pass them down to their children. To buy a home, black families had to save up money, which meant that very often both husband and wife had to each take up one or more jobs. Even though this option entailed even more economic hardship, some African Americans of Portland were so frustrated with the discriminatory situation in rental housing, that they opted for this strategy.¹⁰⁴ Looking at the available census data, this option seems to have been more open to blacks in Portland after 1940.

This data is in line with what Mary Jane Cummings remembered about the time period of World War II where “suddenly there emerged some people who really had done well.”¹⁰⁵ As Lumpkins and Eastman describe, the U.S. navy station and shipyards in Portland during World War II caused an economic boom from which the black community could also benefit. Many black families would gain additional income by turning their homes into rooming houses for African Americans or family members working defense industry jobs in the shipyards. Even more

than for the white population, the impact of World War II on Portland seems to have improved the economic situation of African Americans so that they were able to buy their own homes and successfully resist discrimination in rental housing. Yet these homes were still situated mostly in the West End or on Munjoy Hill, suggesting that the strategy of home ownership could not successfully challenge discriminatory housing patterns.¹⁰⁶

Countering the discriminatory practices of whites especially from all-white neighborhoods, African Americans made it a point to create and enjoy an all-inclusive, multicultural neighborhood. Blacks on Munjoy Hill especially had friendly relationships with their mostly foreign-born neighbors. The Williams family, for example, was the only black family on their street, but the mother Florence Eastman Williams would talk to their Irish, Polish, and Italian immigrant neighbors over the fence.¹⁰⁷ Her daughter June McKenzie said: “[Y]ou could go away on weekends and leave your house open and the neighbors would take care.”¹⁰⁸ Beverly Dodge Bowens remembered similar relationships with her neighbors on Munjoy Hill, who would watch the children when both parents were at work or they would take them to the beach for the day. As her parents enjoyed these friendly relationships, they made it clear that their children “could not be rude to the neighbors.”¹⁰⁹ When he had moved to Portland in the late 1950s, Gerald Talbot described how a white grocer on Munjoy Hill would help him out.

Sometimes I was out of a job. I would go across the street. Just about across the street and had a little store over there [sic], right on the corner. We used to call it Sam's cause that's who it was, Sam's. He would live right up the street. I could get my groceries and I'm saying: Sam I need so-and-so and so-and-so. I can get that and he'd put it on my bill. Can you believe that? [laugh] At the end of the week or whatever, I made sure I went in and I'd paid my bill. I made sure. And you become good friends.¹¹⁰

The descriptions of relationships between blacks and whites on Munjoy Hill all speak of a harmonious living experience, something that was not possible for blacks elsewhere in the city. African Americans on Munjoy Hill turned around discriminatory housing patterns to their favor by making their lives joyful and by including their white neighbors in the creation of a friendly multicultural neighborhood. This achievement was the result of a lesson the rest of white Portland had yet to learn.¹¹¹

Conclusion

African-American resistance to racism in such fields as education, employment, and housing was a great achievement for the Portland blacks at the time, especially considering their small numbers. However, it is important to note that this behavior was not too different from other small black communities in New England. Approaching a more desirable lifestyle by sticking together and “making it work” in their everyday life, African Americans in other small towns such as Bangor or Portsmouth similarly carved niches for themselves in the social landscape dominated by whites. There are also parallels between the African-American community in Portland and communities in bigger New England cities like Boston, New Haven, or Newport, where the mechanisms of community building were the same. Black churches and close-knit housing patterns created cohesive communities, whether there were barely three hundred blacks or sixty-three thousand.

Larger African-American communities, however, created more opportunities in fields such as business and housing as well as political organization. Whereas small town blacks had to come to an arrangement with the white majority or cater to blacks coming from the outside, cities provided a larger black clientele and offered more black professionals as well as more black-led businesses the chance to thrive. Interestingly, it seems that these opportunities for social ascent created more class differences between African Americans. Whereas in small communities like Portland every member of the community counted to sustain local institutions like a black church, in larger communities, members had more choice in which community they wanted to belong. In New Haven and Boston, for example, influenced through the local universities, more educated and better employed blacks would choose the location of their home close to one another in one part of town apart from blacks with lower income. Furthermore, successful political activism started sooner in, for example, Boston than anywhere in Maine or New Hampshire. While the same mechanisms of racial discrimination persisted in both localities, the bigger presence of Boston blacks and the closer proximity to other cities with larger African-American populations enabled local activists to start publicly visible movements, such as the one around Ruth Batson against de-facto segregated schools. In northern New England, the handfuls of blacks attending their community’s single school could leave the impression of being perfectly integrated, yet racism lurked under even more evasive covers.

Looking at small black communities like in Portland can be difficult

due to the paucity of source material, but it is fruitful to discover similarities between how African-American community building and individual strategies of resistance worked in places with vastly diverging numbers of population. New England in particular offers insights into the lower end of the spectrum concerning the number of black inhabitants and their percentage of the total population. This made the experience of New England blacks somewhat unique and fostered a certain pride in being New Englanders and being black. This regional identity requires further research, not only to complete the history of African Americans in New England cities, but also to discover new insights into race accommodation and resistance in the northern United States.

NOTES

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2. Bob Greene, interview by the author, digital recording, Portland, Maine, 13 December 2011.

3. This study uses "African-American" and "black" interchangeably. At the same time "black" has been chosen not to be capitalized following Kevin Gaines, who wrote: "I have chosen not to capitalize 'black' because I prefer not to reify color as a basis for group identity, the logic of which would also seem to require that I capitalize 'white.'" Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting The Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), xxiii.

4. The civil rights movements of the 1960s in Maine has been treated extensively in: Charles Lumpkins, "Civil Rights Activism in Maine from the 1940s to 1971: Black Mainers, Black and White Activists, and the Resistance Against Racism" (Master's thesis, University of Maine, 1992); Charles Lumpkins, "Civil Rights Activism in Maine, 1945-1971," in *Maine History* 36, Nos. 3-4 (1997): 70-85; Eben Simmons Miller, "Resistance in a Northern State: African-American Protest History in Maine, 1663-1996" (Bachelor's thesis, Bates College, 1996); Eben Simmons Miller, "Resistance in 'Pioneer Territory': The Maine NAACP and the Pursuit of Fair Housing Legislation," in *Maine History* 36, Nos. 3-4 (1997): 86-

105; Harriet H. Price and Gerald E. Talbot, eds., *Maine's Visible Black History: The First Chronicle of Its People* (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, 2006).

5. See for example: Myra B. Young Armstead, "*Lord, Please Don't Take Me in August*": *African Americans in Newport and Saratoga Springs, 1870-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Jeanne Theoharis, "'They Told Us Our Kids Were Stupid': Ruth Batson and the Educational Movement in Boston," in *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America*, edited by Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), 17-44; Jeanne Theoharis, "'I'd Rather Go to School in the South': How Boston's School Desegregation Complicates the Civil Rights Paradigm," in *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South 1940-1980*, edited by Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 125-152; Robert C. Hayden, *African Americans in Boston: More Than 350 Years* (Boston: Trustees of the Boston Public Library, 1991).

6. There were local organizations of the NAACP in Bangor and Portland, but both could not effect a more concerted effort that would have expanded beyond their respective towns. See Price and Talbot; Maureen Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor: African Americans in a Maine Community, 1880-1950* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005).

7. June McKenzie, interview, video recording, Anchor of the Soul Collection, Box 1, Folder 16, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries. All of the interviews in the Anchor of the Soul Collection were conducted for the 1994 video documentary of the same name by Shoshana Hoose and Karine Odlin. Repetitions as well as filling utterances such as "uh," "you know," or "like" transcribed for the interviews are left out in this study without further notice.

8. June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection.

9. For Portsmouth, see Mark J. Sammons and Valerie Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth: Three Centuries of African-American Heritage* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2004); for Bangor, see Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor*.

10. Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor*, xvi.

11. Maureen Elgersman Lee "'What They Lack in Numbers': Locating Black Portland 1870-1930," in *Creating Portland: History and Place in Northern New England*, ed. Joseph A. Conforti (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005), 220-223; Stan Clough, "Zion Upon A Hill: Portland's A.M.E. Zion Church and Social Uplift in the Progressive Era" (Master's thesis, University of Southern Maine, Portland, ME, 1994), 76-77. Also see the genealogical work of Bob Greene, *Maine Roots V: The Manuel/Mathews/Ruby Family* (South Portland: Big Bro Production, 2008), I.

12. Gwendolyn Hill, interview, video recording, Anchor of the Soul Collection, Box 1, Folder 16, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries; For David A. Dickson, see Price and Talbot, 246; For Cyril Durrant, see United States Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, manuscript, Portland Ward 7, Cumberland, Maine, Roll: T625_640, Page: 18A, Enumeration District: 50, Image: 295; For Thalia Perry, see United States Bureau of the Census,

Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, manuscript, Portland Ward 1, Cumberland, Maine, Roll: T625_639, Page: 11B, Enumeration District: 30, Image: 906; For the Colored Community Center, see "Colored Center Has New Board," *Portland Evening Express*, 21 October 1943.

13. The cohesion of the 1940s and 50s black community resembled the community of the Progressive Era described in Clough, 84-85.

14. It is hard to establish concrete numbers, but this estimate by David A. Dickson, contemporary Portland resident in 1943, gives an impression of the relative magnitude of this influx. David A. Dickson, President of the Colored Community Center for Servicemen, Portland, to James W. Gaeter, Recreation Division, Office of Community War Services, Washington D.C., 1 August 1943, National Archives, RG 215, Box 122.

15. June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection. More on social mingling between locals and newcomers, see Kate Kennedy, *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Maine Women* (Guilford, CT: Twodot, 2005), 107-109. For the Colored Community Center and USO club, see Price and Talbot, 183-185, 323; Program Dedication Ceremony, African-American History Collection, Folder on World War II, Maine Historical Society. For the Green Lantern Grill, see Norma McIlvaine Readdy, "The Green Lantern," in Price and Talbot, 322-323; For A.M.E. Zion Church during World War II, see "Leaves for new field," *Portland Evening Express*, 17 June 1943; Bob Greene, "Beyond the Abyssinian," in Price and Talbot, 150; For marriages between locals and newcomers, see Bob Greene, interview.

16. Leonard and Mary Jane Cummings, interview by Charles Lumpkins, tape recording, Portland, Maine, 28 November 1990, NAACP and Civil Rights in Maine Collection, Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History, Maine Folklife Center, University of Maine.

17. "Obituaries: Thomasina Lestine Cummings," *Portland Press Herald*, 12 February 2002.

18. Community assistance in child-rearing in Portland, see Clough, 97-99; Lumpkins, Master's thesis, 36-39; For these and further examples, see Mary Jane and Leonard Cummings, interview, video recording, Anchor of the Soul Collection, Box 1, Folder 16, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries; Dieter Bradbury, "Black history up close and personal," *Portland Evening Express*, 11 February 1988, 1, 12; Don Snyder, "Struggling Toward Zion," *Maine Sunday Telegram*, 11 February 197, 3D; Greene, *Maine Roots*, 29-31, 52.

19. Price and Talbot, 328-329. See further: Bob Greene, interview; Gerald Talbot, interview by the author, digital recording, Portland, Maine, 12 December 2011.

20. Eugene Jackson, interview, video recording, Anchor of the Soul Collection, Box 1, Folder 17, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.

21. Bob Greene, interview.

22. See further, for example: Gerald E. Talbot, "Easter and Fourth of July Picnics," in Price and Talbot, 325; Eugene Jackson, interview; Gwendolyn Hill, interview; Harold Richardson, interview, video recording, Anchor of the Soul Collection,

Box 1, Folder 16, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.

23. June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection.

24. For the history of both churches, see Price and Talbot, 147-152; Randolph P. Dominic, Jr., "Down from the Balcony: The Abyssinian Congregational Church of Portland, Maine." (Unpublished thesis, 1982), Maine Historical Society. For social activities of the A.M.E. Zion Church, see for example: Lumpkins, Master's Thesis, 33-35; Simmons Miller, Bachelor's thesis, 69-72. For black churches or lack thereof in other New England cities, see Sammons and Cunningham, 145-153; Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor*, 89-95; Young Armstead, 48, 115-117; Robert Austin Warner, *New Haven Negroes: A Social History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 211-17; Hayden, 129-137.

25. Harold Richardson, interview.

26. Eugene Jackson, interview.

27. Anita Talbot, interview by Charles Lumpkins, tape recording, Portland, Maine, 28 November 1990, as quoted in: Lumpkins, Master's thesis, 35; Simmons Miller, Bachelor's thesis, 71.

28. Harold Richardson, interview. A similar statement was made in: Eugene Jackson, interview.

29. Anita Talbot, interview. For the church choirs, see June KcKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection; Eugene Jackson, interview; "Zion Church Starts New Music Group," *Portland Press Herald*, 22 January 1951. For the "Mis-Ter-Ray Club," see for example: Gertrude O. Cutler, "Just Talk: Gladys Is A Quorum For Mis-Ter-Rays," in: *Portland Evening Express* (Date unknown), Anchor of the Soul Collection, Box 1, Folder 21, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries; "Mis-Ter-Ray Club To Mark 25th Year," *Portland Press Herald*, 11 December 1948. For the "Harlem Nite Club," see Price and Talbot, 223.

30. Harold Richardson, interview.

31. For the musical program of A.M.E. Zion Church, see for example: Price and Talbot, 225. For black church chicken dinners in general, see Jualynne E. Dodson and Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "There's Nothing Like Church Food: Food and the U.S. Afro-Christian Tradition: Re-Membering Community and Feeding the Embodied S/spirit(s)," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63, No.3 (1995), 521-525. For chicken dinners in Portland, see Clough, 144; Simmons Miller, Bachelor's thesis, 71-72; Eugene Jackson, interview; Harold Richardson, interview.

32. Bob Greene, interview.

33. Gerald Talbot, interview by Charles Lumpkins.

34. It seems as this example was not an isolated incident, as June McKenzie also related to the negative media coverage of African Americans in Portland, see June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection.

35. Bob Greene, interview.

36. For the study of Charles Johnson, see Charles S. Johnson, *Patterns of Negro Segregation* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1943), 12. For examples of

the integrated schools and student's social lives, see for example the Portland High School yearbook: *The Totem*, (Portland, ME: Students of Portland High School, Maine, 1930-1959). Also, see for example: Beverly Bowens, interview by Vanesa Saric, tape recording, Portland, Maine, 31 March 2001, "Home Is Where I Make It" Oral History Collection, Box 1, Folder 3, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries. For Boston, see Theoharis, "I'd Rather." For Bangor, see Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor*, 95-104.

37. Mary Jane and Leonard Cummings, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection.

38. Eugene Jackson, interview. For his graduating yearbook entry, see *The Totem*, (1941), 48.

39. For Harold Richardson's similar story, see Harold Richardson, interview. His graduating yearbook entry can be found here: *The Totem*, (1941), 56.

40. Joanne Lannin, "Awards honor 10 Maine black women," in: *Portland Press Herald* (21 March 1992).

41. Bob Greene, interview. Similar Testimony for the 1960s in: Scott C. Jackson, "What It's Like To Be A Negro in Maine's Largest City," in *Maine Digest* 3, No.1 (1969): 21.

42. Bob Greene, interview.

43. Johnson, 223.

44. For contemporary studies of these specific attitudes surrounding race and sex in the northern U.S., see Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, NY, London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1944), 56, 606-610, 617, 633; St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. New York, Evanston: Harper & Row, 1945, 127-133; Johnson, 150. See also Sugrue, 154.

45. Jackson, "What It's Like," 23.

46. For more on the basis for these attitudes surrounding race and sex, see for example Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the 19th-Century South*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997; Martha Hodes (ed.), *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, New York: New York University Press, 1999.

47. For the development of strictly black circles of friends, see Gerald Talbot, interview by the author; Mary Jane and Leonard Cummings, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection. Similar developments could be found elsewhere in New England, such as New Haven, CT, see Johnson, 25; and Bangor, ME, see Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor*, 88, 104. For testimonies of African-American teenagers passing in Portland, see June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection; Bob Greene, interview.

48. Richard H. Condon, "Maine Out of the Mainstream, 1945-1965," in *Maine: The Pine Tree State from Prehistory to the Present*, eds. Richard W. Judd, Edwin A. Churchill and Joel W. Eastman (Orono, ME: University of Maine Press, 1995), 544.

49. For racist practices in education and career counseling in Boston, see Theoharis, "I'd Rather," 130.

50. Beverly and Willard Callender, interview.
51. Lannin.
52. For the lack of adequate career counseling for African Americans in Portland, see Willard D. Callender, Jr., "A Survey of the Negro Community in the City of Portland," 1964, Maine Historical Society, 12; James Mathews, interview, tape recording, Portland, Maine, 31 March 2001, "Home Is Where I Make It" Oral History Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.
53. Harold Richardson, interview.
54. For the limited supply of teachers in Maine, see Condon. 545. For the racist attitudes towards black teachers, see Price and Talbot, 168; Gerald Talbot, interview by the author; Elgersman Lee, "Locating," 228; James Mathews, interview. For Bangor, see Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor*, 34-35, 107. For Portsmouth, see Sammons and Cunningham, 163-166. For Boston, see Theoharis, "I'd Rather."
55. Callender, "Survey," 12.
56. See Lindsay Tice, "E. Cummings, popular teacher, civic volunteer," *Portland Press Herald*, 27 January 2000; Rosy Elliott, "I'm Singulah!" in: *Salt: Journal of New England Culture* 24 (Winter 1984), 40, 43; Leonard and Mary Jane Lumpkins, interview by Charles Lumpkins.
57. For Roland Richardson, see "Obituaries: Roland Paul Richardson, 74," *Portland Press Herald*, 27 March 2001. For Beverly Bowens, see Beverly Bowens, interview; Price and Talbot, 248. For Eugene Baxter, see Greene, *Maine Roots*, 26. For the Dickson family, see Elgersman Lee, "Locating," 239; Mildred Myhrman and Elizabeth Jonitis, "Maine Negroes Are Playing Vital Role In The Life Of Our Country," *Lewiston Journal*, 29 December 1962, 6A; Price and Talbot, 246. For Ann Searcy, see Price and Talbot, 166.
58. June McKenzie, interview by Aretha Williams. Similar in: Elliott, 50.
59. Bob Greene, interview.
60. For these and more examples, see Callender, "Survey," 11-12; Patricia McGraw Anderson and William David Barry, *Deering: A Social and Architectural History* (Portland, ME: Greater Portland Landmarks, Inc., 2010), 119; June McKenzie, interview by Aretha Williams, tape recording, Portland, Maine, 23 May 2001, "Home Is Where I Make It" Oral History Collection, Box 1, Folder 6, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries; C. Kalimah Redd, "Revived railroad carries memories for black Mainers," *Portland Press Herald*, 4 February 2002, 1A.
61. Eugene Jackson, interview.
62. Callender, "Survey," 8. Furthermore on "negro occupations," see Lumpkins, master's thesis, 30-31; Lumpkins, *Maine History*, 72. For the employment numbers of Maine blacks, see Simmons Miller, bachelor's thesis, 56-61; Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Maine, Orono, Maine, *Maine's Nonwhite Population* (Orono, ME: Agricultural Experiment Station, University of

Maine, 1964), 8-11. For the generally weak economic situation in Maine, see Simmons Miller, bachelor's thesis, 59; Lumpkins, master's thesis, 32; Eugene Jackson, interview. For Bangor, see Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor*, 24-52. For Newport, see Young Armstead, 62-110.

63. Further examples can be found here: Greene, *Maine Roots*, 37; Kennedy, 107-116; Gertrude O. Cutler, "Just Talk: Four Is A Trio As These Gals Chorus," *Portland Evening Express*, 7 May 1963; Cutler, "Mis-Ter-Rays;" Mary Jane and Leonard Cummings, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection; Price and Talbot, 119-120.

64. Mary Jane and Leonard Cummings, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection.

65. June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection. The job of elevator operator was a more than common job especially for black women in Portland. This trend started as early as 1930, see Elgersman Lee, "Locating," 228.

66. Eugene Jackson, interview. Similar statements of African Americans giving up on applying for better jobs can be found in: Callender, "Survey," 8-10; Gwendolyn Hill, interview. For racist employer practices, see furthermore for example: Jackson, "What It's Like," 24; Price and Talbot, 169-170; Redd; Elgersman Lee, "Locating," 228; Greene, *Maine Roots*, 51.

67. June McKenzie and Ruth Fisher Greene, mother of Bob Greene, are further examples of this kind of policy of department stores hiring blacks only as elevator operators or window designers, see June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection; Greene, *Maine Roots*, 51; Bob Greene, interview. For the story of Barbara Nichols, see Lannin. For the issue of perceived intimacy between the races, see Callender, "Survey," 10; Lumpkins, master's thesis, 54.

68. See further Cedric Herring, "Skin Deep: Race and Complexion in the 'Color-Blind' Era," in *Skin Deep: How Race and Complexion Matter in the 'Color-Blind' Era*, eds. Cedric Herring, Verna Keith and Hayward D. Horton (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 5-6; Margaret Hunter, "Light, Bright, and Almost White: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Light Skin," in *Skin Deep: How Race and Complexion Matter in the 'Color-Blind' Era*, eds. Cedric Herring, Verna Keith and Hayward D. Horton (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 30-37; Myrdal, 697-699.

69. Gerald Talbot, interview by Charles Lumpkins.

70. For the examples listed, see Donald Fisher, interview by Charles Lumpkins, tape recording, Auburn, Maine, 22 November 1990, NAACP and Civil Rights in Maine Collection, Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History, Maine Folklife Center, University of Maine; Gerald Talbot, interview by the author.

71. For the information network provided through Green Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, see June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection. For the personal network around Charles Edward Cummings, see Bruce Roberts, "We Hear: Union Station's 'Capt.' Eddie Is 90," newspaper clipping, date unknown, folder on Cummings family, Maine Historical Society; Price and Talbot, 119-121; Redd. For the employment function of the Green Lantern, see McIlvaine Readdy, 322-323. For information networks in Bangor, see Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor*, 37-38. For Newport, see Young Armstead, 35.

72. Redd.

73. Roberts.

74. *Portland Press Herald*, 14 June 1984, as quoted in: Price and Talbot, 120.

75. Bob Greene, interview.

76. For the theory of Drake and Cayton, see Drake and Cayton, 239-240.

77. For Moses Green, see for example: Price and Talbot, 119, 127, 151; Greene, "Beyond," 149-150; Copy of Last Will and Testament of Moses S. Green, Anchor of the Soul Collection, Box 2, Folder 29, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries; Eastern Real Estate Company Archives, Box 1, Folder 2, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.

78. For other shoeshine stand proprietors, see Greene, *Maine Roots*, 53; Harold Richardson, interview. For Kippy's Cleaning Service, see Price and Talbot, 133-134; "Obituaries: Clifford A. 'Kippy' Richardson," newspaper clipping, date unknown, Maine's Visible Black History: Research Papers Collection, Collection 2256, Box 13, Folder 23, Maine Historical Society. For Jim Searcy's gas station, see Price and Talbot, 134.

79. Bouchard, A6.

80. Bob Greene, interview.

81. Gerald Talbot, interview by the author.

82. For the problems of African Americans with vacationing in the northern U.S. in general, see Mark S. Foster, "In the Face of 'Jim Crow': Prosperous Blacks and Vacations, Travel and Outdoor Leisure, 1890-1945," *The Journal of Negro History* 84 No.2 (1999): 130-149. Specifically for Portland and Maine, see Dennis Bailey, "Some People Still Think the Word Nigger is Funny. Blacks Don't," *Maine Times*, 26 November 1982; Kelly Bouchard, "Guestbook holds memories of black travelers' haven," *Maine Sunday Telegram*, 24 August 2008, A6. For the Thomas' rooming house, see McIlvaine Readdy; Bouchard, A6; *The Negro Traveler's Green Book* (New York, NY: Victor H. Green Publishers, 1956), 26, University of South Carolina Libraries, <<http://library.sc.edu/digital/collections/greenbook.html>> accessed 10 March 2012; *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (New York, NY: Victor H. Green Publishers, 1949), 34, Collection of the Henry Ford Museum, <http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Race/R_Casestudy/87_135_1736_GreenBk.pdf> accessed 10 March 2012. It can be suspected that Emma Thomas had a similar status to Harold Hill as a women's hairdresser coming to Portland on weekends in the 1950s, see Price and Talbot, 126.

83. All information on the Eastern Real Estate Company stems from the Eastern Real Estate Company Archives, Box 1, Folders 2-4, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries. The race of persons mentioned in this material was determined where possible with Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Census of the United States 1920, 1930, and 1940 manuscript data. For reasons of space, names and exact locations in the census data are not listed here.

84. For the restaurants of Leola Marshall and the Roberts family, see Price and Talbot, 128.

85. Bob Greene, interview.
86. For the significance of fried chicken in particular, see Psyche Williams-Forson, *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Of all the Southern foods Gertrude O. Cutler could have picked to describe the black cook Helen Roberts, she only mentioned her fried chicken, in Cutler, "Four Is A Trio." The possibility of food becoming a tool for resistance is described in: Psyche Williams-Forson, "Chickens and Chains: Using African-American Foodways to Understand Black Identities," in *African-American Foodways: Explorations of History and Culture*, ed. Anne L. Bower (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 133-135. For African-American restaurants in Boston, see Hayden, 80-81.
87. Menu of the Plantation restaurant, Maine's Visible Black History: Research Papers Collection, Collection 2256, Box 3, Folder 9, Maine Historical Society.
88. For the restaurants of Leola Marshall and the Roberts family, see Price and Talbot, 128. For the significance of fried chicken in particular, see Psyche Williams-Forson, *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Of all the Southern foods Gertrude O. Cutler could have picked to describe the black cook Helen Roberts, she only mentioned her fried chicken, in Cutler, "Four Is A Trio." The possibility of food becoming a tool for resistance is described in: Psyche Williams-Forson, "Chickens and Chains: Using African-American Foodways to Understand Black Identities," in *African-American Foodways: Explorations of History and Culture*, ed. Anne L. Bower (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 133-135. For African-American restaurants in Boston, see Hayden, 80-81.
89. Beverly and Willard Callender, interview.
90. Donald Fisher, interview.
91. Myrdal, 619.
92. For other descriptions of the housing patterns in Portland, see for example: Gwendolyn Hill, interview; Harold Richardson, interview; Gerald Talbot, interview by Charles Lumpkins. For the development of these housing patterns, see Clough, 73-75; Simmons Miller, bachelor's thesis, 65. For Bangor, see Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor*, 53-67. For Newport, see Young Armstead, 49-50. For Boston, see Hayden, 16-26. For New Haven, see Warner, 195-201.
93. Stephen and Judy Halpert, interview. A similar description can be found in: Donald Fisher, interview.
94. Gerald Talbot, interview by Charles Lumpkins. Similarly stated in: June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection.
95. For descriptions of the discriminatory practices of real estate agents and landlords, mostly uncovered by civil rights activists in the 1960s, see Simmons Miller, *Maine History*, 87-88; Maine State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Report on Maine: Denial of Equal Opportunity in Rental Housing and its Effect on Negroes in Portland and Bangor, Maine*. Washington D.C.: United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1965, 4-6; Callender, "Survey," 5-6; Gerald E. Talbot, "A Fair Housing Experience in Portland," in Price and Talbot, 293; Jackson, "What It's Like," 24-25.

96. Drake and Cayton, 190, italics in original.
97. June McKenzie, interview, Anchor of the Soul Collection.
98. See further: Callender, "Survey," 6-7; Drake and Cayton, 174; Sugrue, 202-204.
99. Donald Fisher, interview. See also, Callender, "Survey," 6-7.
100. Compare with: Sugrue, 206; Drake and Cayton, 175; Lumpkins, master's thesis, 58.
101. This could be determined with the manuscript census data of 1920 and 1930, as well as the Portland City Directories, 1941-1959, Portland Public Library.
102. Unfortunately the main tenant James A. Smith can only strongly be suspected to have been white, as he could not be identified in the manuscript census data, but worked at a job out of town in Biddeford, Maine, which would have been an atypical opportunity for blacks at the time. Portland City Directory, 1951, Portland Public Library.
103. All information, except where noted differently, taken from: Eastern Real Estate Company Archives, Box 1, Folder 2-4, African-American Collection of Maine, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.
104. For the significance of home ownership to Portland African Americans, see for example: Donald Fisher; interview; Gerald Talbot, interview by Charles Lumpkins; Elgersman Lee, "Locating," 218, 232; Talbot, "Fair Housing," 295.
105. Mary Jane and Leonard Cummings, interview by Charles Lumpkins.
106. For the impact of the World War II economic boom on Portland in general, see Lumpkins, master's thesis, 36-37; Joel W. Eastman, "From Declining Seaport to Liberty City: Portland During Depression and War," in *Creating Portland: History and Place in Northern New England*, ed. Joseph A. Conforti (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005), 274, 280-284. For the economic avenues African Americans pursued in this time, see for example: Harold Richardson, interview; Price and Talbot, 188-189; Greene, *Maine Roots*, 36, 50-51; Snyder.
107. Kennedy, 113.
108. June McKenzie, interview by Aretha Williams.
109. Beverly Bowens, interview.
110. Gerald Talbot, interview by the author.
111. See further: Clough, 75-76; Bob Greene, interview; Stephen and Judy Halpert, interview.