

BLUE-LINED COMMUNITIES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXPANSION OF THE
NASSAU COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT DURING THE CIVIL RIGHTS
MOVEMENT, 1954-1971

Summer Thomas

AN HONORS THESIS

in

History

Presented to the Faculty of the
Department of History of the University of Pennsylvania
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

2022

Kathy Peiss, Honors Seminar Director

Brent Cebul, Thesis Advisor

Ramya Sreenivasan, Undergraduate Chair, Department of History

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you Dr. Cebul, for your advice, guidance, and patience during this thesis' research and writing process. Thank you for being an incredible professor!

Thank you Dr. Peiss, for your guidance in class, for editing and revising my chapters, and for offering unwavering support to me and my classmates during the research and writing periods.

Thank you Dr. Cassanelli for urging me to become a History major and explore my genuine interests while I still had the incredible opportunity of being a student. I know that I will graduate knowing that I spent my time here learning about things I have come to love and creating things I am proud of.

Thank you to Carlton, Michelle and Madison Thomas, Dawn and Beatrice Binns, and Rema Anderson – my immediate family – for all your unconditional love and support.

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INTRODUCTION

Nassau County was originally colonized and settled by 50 families who purchased tracts of land from the 13 Algonquian tribes indigenous to the 118-mile island in the 1640s. From its inception, the County and island was “planned carefully, ... from Sound to sea.”¹ In 1898, the County seceded from the city of New York, formed an independent governing Board of Supervisors, and was reincorporated as an independent County of New York in 1899.² The expansion of the Long Island Railroad passenger lines along the North and South shores of the island facilitated a steady flow of goods, information, and people to and from New York City. After the LIRR completed a direct rail line to Penn Station in 1911, the population of Nassau County experienced its first wave of explosion.³ From 1900 to 1930, the population grew from 55,488 to 303,053.⁴ This spurred the creation of a County Charter, which took effect in 1938, and established a legislative and judicial framework to preside over the growing population.⁵ The exponential growth in population also led to the creation of the Nassau County Police Department before, in 1925.⁶ Existing towns and villages had already established their own local police forces, but the expansion of residential and commercial developments across the County prompted the establishment of a centralized, service-oriented police

¹ Nassau County Executive's Office, "HISTORY OF NASSAU COUNTY," Nassau County, New York, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3344/History-of-Nassau-County>.

² Nassau County Executive's Office, "HISTORY OF NASSAU COUNTY."

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 8. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

force to render protect these new, largely white residents, offering them a safe environment.

Federal New Deal initiatives and post-WWII grants and mortgages opened the floodgates and gave hundreds of thousands of working and middle-class Americans the opportunity to establish roots in the suburbs of New York. As a result of these landmark reforms and the end of the Second World War, Nassau County's population exploded again, doubling from 672,000 in 1950 to 1,300,700 in 1960.⁷ Initiatives such as [] were restricted to primarily white Americans – both private and public real estate practices such as lending and valuation were influenced by racism. This led to the redlining and downzoning of neighborhoods, a system that created investment risk profiles of neighborhoods, ranked them from A through D, and determined where injections of federal and private capital would breed thriving, manicured communities and which areas would be left to industrial use and decay.⁸ The opinions that informed the appraisals of these neighborhoods were influenced by the widely held belief that the presence of Black residents in a neighborhood signified blight and imminent decline in property values. Redlining fueled housing segregation, as white homebuyers directed their capital away from predominantly Black neighborhoods and Black homebuyers were concentrated into these centers of disinvestment.⁹ While experiencing systemic exclusion across schooling, political, and economic institutions in Nassau County, Black suburban residents staged

⁷ Nassau County Executive's Office, "HISTORY OF NASSAU COUNTY," Nassau County, New York, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3344/History-of-Nassau-County>.

⁸ Richard Kwartler, "Downzoning Creates Slums, Negro Charges," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), December 15, 1965, 15, accessed December 16, 2021, [https://www.newspapers.com/image/713401687/?terms=%22new%20cassel%22%20%22downzone%22&match=1.](https://www.newspapers.com/image/713401687/?terms=%22new%20cassel%22%20%22downzone%22&match=1.;); Gordon, Colin. "Two. Segregating Citizenship: Schools, Safety, and Sewers" In *Citizen Brown: Race, Democracy, and Inequality in the St. Louis Suburbs*, 50-79. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/10.7208/9780226647517-004>

⁹ Gordon, Colin. "Two. Segregating Citizenship: Schools, Safety, and Sewers" In *Citizen Brown*, 50-79.

organized and spontaneous resistance as a part of the national Civil Rights Movement that swept across urban and suburban space nationally during the 1960s. Black Nassau County residents demanded access to the same quality of schools, housing and representation in local politics that their white neighbors enjoyed in the suburbs. Segregation was banned by federal law in 1968 with the Fair Housing Act, but the legacy of the boundaries created by this system were still enforced in suburban space and their boundaries, which were defended by the Nassau County Police Department during and after the moments of the Civil Rights Movement.

The main contribution of this thesis to the larger body of work on the Civil Rights Movement, segregation, and the expansion of the carceral state at Federal and local levels is that it works to frame the conversation of militarized policing and War on Crime politics outside of an urban lens. It focuses instead on how the same landmark Johnson-era programs that transformed and expanded local police departments into quasi-military forces in cities, such as the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (1965) and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act (1968), in response to the perceived outrageous disorder of the Civil Rights Movement and social consequences of disinvestment were also crucial to the expansion of suburban police departments. Through highlighting the legacies of segregation in Nassau County's institutions and built infrastructure, this thesis shows how these directives to surveil, control, and maintain order during the Civil Rights Movement were magnified in suburban space.

Although the program benefits of FDR's New Deal, and later Johnson's Great Society, were offered to overwhelmingly white families, Black Americans also sought to reap the benefits of their service in wartime, leave cities with crumbling social

infrastructure, and establish homes and lives in the suburbs. Black suburban migrants in the 1950s and 60s, however, were overwhelmingly middle-class.¹⁰ They brought with them desires of owning homes in traditional middle-class suburbs, with access to efficient services, proximity to work and leisure opportunities, and manicured neighborhood aesthetics. Many of the publicized declarations for Black enfranchisement came from the growing Black middle-class on Long Island and was rooted in popular homeowner and suburban politics at the time. Black residents interviewed for a *Newsday* special about the Black Long Islander and their condition focused on aspiration from different class perspectives: a barmaid who recently “advanced herself from domestic” wanted to learn how to become a switchboard operator, a Gordon Heights seasonal migrant worker hoped to find work for the winter, and Geraldine Johnson, Nassau County resident, aspired ultimately to become a homeowner in an area where “my kids will get the same education as yours.”¹¹ Resident Thomas Elijah summed up these dreams, however, in a way that transcends the class distinctions of Nassau’s Black community: “My main goal is total mobility.”¹² Black residents understood that the way suburban space was built and grew to function in the early 1950s was to restrict their access to full citizenship and partnership in their community’s powerful institutions. They were also surveilled and expressively restricted in public space, where police and white neighbors alike enforced the social boundaries of segregation. They, like their white neighbors, wanted to express manifestations of economic mobility through the property they owned. Despite this,

¹⁰ Hinton, Elizabeth. "2. Law and Order in the Great Society" In *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*, 63-95. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2017. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/10.4159/9780674969223-003>

¹¹ Harvey Aronson and Thomas A. Johnson, "The Negro on Long Island," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 8, 1966, 13W, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713315214>.

¹² Harvey Aronson and Thomas A. Johnson, "The Negro on Long Island," 13W.

discriminatory lending and selling practices continued to plague the housing market in Nassau County, concentrating Black families into the same neighborhoods, stripping them of access to political enfranchisement, public goods and services, and the overall promise of suburban citizenship that was guaranteed for their white neighbors, regardless of the symbolism that expansion of these rights to Black Americans on a federal scale represented.

Newsday, a Long Island newspaper, published special investigative reports on the state of affairs in Nassau and Suffolk Counties' small Black communities during John's War on Crime and Poverty. These articles, published primarily from 1963 to 1969, draw attention to the oppressed conditions and imbalanced institutions that Nassau County's Black residents had available to them, as well as shed light on the aspirations of different groups of Nassau County's Black residents in an attempt to present the diverse perspectives on the Civil Rights Era that class produced in Black communities.¹³ Despite *Newsday's* detailed coverage on slums and slum conditions, they also highlight negative public opinions among white homeowners pertaining to the creation of low-income or affordable housing, a solution proposed to the crises of poverty, vagrancy, and homelessness in the 1930s that endured through the 1970s, in their neighborhoods. In the arena of local government white voters and representatives fought fiercely against NAACP calls for construction of low-income and affordable housing in Nassau County's Black enclaves, and then fought to keep these developments as they were happening in

¹³ *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY). "The Shame of the Slums." February 11, 1963, 55-56. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/712680320>.; Aronson, Harvey, and Thomas A. Johnson. "The Negro on Long Island." *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 8, 1966, 5W-15W. Accessed December 16, 2021. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713315214>.

Inwood, Roosevelt, and Hempstead among other places from spilling over into the boundaries of white suburban space.

The routine and systematic denial of full citizenship rights to Black renters and homeowners alike, at least within the boundaries of suburban space, was the impetus of white homeowners and bolstered by the Nassau County Police Department. At both the Federal and County level, these suburban taxpayers were pouring more and more money into the aggressive expansion of a militarized police force to maintain law and order and acutely surveil communities perceived as responsible for disturbing the peace.

Investments were not only made in expanding the manpower and arsenal of the police, but also cementing their presence at the borders between wealthy white suburbs and the low-income, predominantly Black enclaves that serviced them. Pay increases negotiated annually between 1960 and 1970 ensured police the right to live in suburbs and symbolized another form of investment by white suburbanites and local government in the expansion of the physical presence of police and enmeshing this presence throughout the social fabric of Nassau County.

Excluded from Nassau County's dominating rosy narrative of successful planning and growth is a confrontation with the influence and legacy that suburban patterns of segregation had on community and police responses to Black residential demands for social, economic, and political enfranchisement during the Civil Rights Era. Processes of spatial and social isolation physically and socially stunted the growth of Black communities across the 20th century, and policing functioned as an arm of this isolation system to restrict the movement and expressions of Black enclaves that emerged despite massive and rigid systemic barriers.

Therefore, this thesis explores how the NCPD became a powerful institution in Nassau County suburbs, accumulating enormous political, social, and economic capital at the exact moment the county reached its peak population of 1,428,838 residents in 1970.¹⁴ It also considers this expansion within the historical context of suburban patterns of race-based segregation, isolation, and disenfranchisement in Nassau County and argues that the boundaries of these patterns are maintained by policing. The social enforcement and infrastructural legacies of race-based housing segregation in suburban space also defined one of the goals of policing in suburban space as protecting predefined boundaries of historically white suburban space. The first chapter tells the story of the departmental expansion of the Nassau County Police Department from an operational perspective. Focusing on the period of 1954 to 1976, the first chapter recounts and analyzes decisions made by Police leadership – Commissioners John Beckmann (1945-61), James J. Kelly (1962-65), Francis B. Looney (1966-71), and Louis J. Frank (1972-1976) – that led to the growth of the NCPD in both membership and power. This chapter also considers the different social and political undercurrents that spurred the expansion of this NCPD from 1954 to 1976. Exploding residential population, new federal and private investments in commerce and infrastructure, and the politics of fear that emerged in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement all emerged as new reasons to expand the NCPD, which became the seventh largest police force in the country by 1975.¹⁵

The early stages of the Department's expansion were in response to the increasing population, which was prompted as Long Island Rail Road lines expanded and major

¹⁴ Nassau County Executive's Office, "HISTORY OF NASSAU COUNTY," Nassau County, New York, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3344/History-of-Nassau-County>.

¹⁵ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 88. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

federal changes made homeownership more accessible to middle and working-class Americans. The post-WWII G.I. Bill, racially preferential FHA and private lending regulations, and new tax incentives for homeowners and businesses moving to suburbs were all catalysts for a sustained population growth in Nassau County from 1930 to 1960.¹⁶ Under Beckmann, the police force expanded as well, establishing new bureaus, and using new technologies to better serve the booming white communities of Nassau County and address their concerns. This included the establishment of the Highway Patrol in 1935, an exemplar of the service-oriented policing and lifestyle that white Americans sought to claim for themselves in the suburbs.¹⁷ Engrained into the functions of this suburban service society is its reliance on a peripheral, racialized working-class to meet its needs. Early waves of Black suburbanization in the 1930s and 40s filled these pockets in neighborhoods like Roslyn Heights, Glen Cove, and Spinney Hill, and white residents sought to restrict their access to public and private services despite their expanding presence. As these social boundaries emerged alongside physical patterns of segregation, the Nassau County Police Department's role was to enforce them, protecting the overall fragility of one of the core foundations of suburban space – segregation.

The Nassau County Department underwent another stage of growth during the 1960s in response to the changing social and economic makeup and priorities of Nassau County suburbs. Under Kelly and later Looney's leadership, these stages of growth were funded and supported by a largely white, middle-class society that fiercely resisted the

¹⁶ Gordon, Colin. "Two. Segregating Citizenship: Schools, Safety, and Sewers" In *Citizen Brown: Race, Democracy, and Inequality in the St. Louis Suburbs*, 50-79. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/10.7208/9780226647517-004>

¹⁷ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 93. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

socioeconomic shifts that suburbs and cities were experiencing on a national scale in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement. At the federal level, the Law Enforcement Assistance Act of 1965 pipelined \$30 million into grants that were made available to local police departments to be used in the purchase of bulletproof vests, tanks, rifles, helicopters, and military grade weapons for officers. Chapter One defines the early 1960s as a period during which this expansion was motivated by building the Police Department's physical infrastructure of power and the mid-to-late-1960s as a period during which the Department fought to maintain their legitimacy as an institution by cementing themselves in the social fabric of white and Black suburbs in Nassau County.

Chapter Two highlights the rising social and political power that the Nassau County Police Department was able to aggressively pursue and maintain throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s in the wake of the 1964 and 1968 summer riots that would come to characterize the Civil Rights Movement in contemporary media and politics. The bulk of the sources in this chapter come from the period 1964-1970, during which the Nassau County Police Benevolent Association became the official bargaining agent of the NCPD and the most powerful bargaining agents countywide. The expansion of the Police Department's soft power in the County required the creation of programs that would fold white residents into the arms, or rather, *eyes and ears*, of the Department and encourage their participation in maintaining segregated boundaries out of fear that negative externalities of the Civil Rights Movement in New York City would spill over into suburban space.¹⁸ Alongside the expansion of these programs, Nassau County police officers negotiated annual pay increases that outpaced national averages. The Nassau

¹⁸ Nassau County Police Department. "The Neighborhood Security Program." *Signal One*, Spring 1971, 2-6. PDF.

County Police Benevolent Association (NCPBA) not only bargained aggressively for access to comfortable homeownership in suburban space, but they also voiced opposition to the extension of promotion opportunities and special task force assignments to Black officers.¹⁹

Meanwhile, the Department launched social programming aimed at increasing interaction with and recruitment among minority communities in Nassau County. These new Black officers, excluded from the powerful NCPBA, created their own police benevolent organization, and partnered with Black police brotherhoods statewide to become especially vocal in the 1960s as the Civil Rights Movement and police were positioned as diametrically opposed.²⁰ The chapter ends, however, questioning the intentions and effects of these Civil Rights Era recruitment programs, centering a 1977 U.S. Supreme Court case brought against the NCPD to investigate racial discrimination, as well as to analyze whether or not federal funds during Johnson's Great Society were used appropriately on the force, which remained 1.5% Black.²¹

Finally, the third chapter examines closely the case of New Cassel, to paint a larger picture of infrastructural violence – which explains how the planned distribution of resources across populations also inherently defines who is included and excluded from society – in Nassau County. In New Cassel, the three processes of residential segregation, political disenfranchisement, and repressive policing all converged to extinguish

¹⁹ Altshul, Jack. "Casino Men Have Ace in Hole." *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), September 8, 1967, 37. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713794173>.

²⁰ National Black Policeman's Association. "\$730,000 to WHO, for WHAT, and WHY." *National Black Policeman's Association*, 1968, 42. https://hv-proquest-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/pdfs/201929/201929_194_0019/201929_194_0019_0002_From_51_to_100.pdf.

²¹ United States of America v. Nassau County, No. 9:77-CV-01881, slip op. at 2 (Dec. 18, 2019). <https://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/public/EE-NY-0203-0015.pdf>.

moments of organized and spontaneous resistance during the Civil Rights Movement. In the decades prior, New Cassel had been systemically isolated from the surrounding towns of Westbury and South Westbury. White homeowners voted to separate from and industrialize the densely populated, predominantly Black 1.5 square-mile triangle, carving it out as a new census tract and establishing separate public service functions, namely water, sewage, and schools. This final chapter illustrates how these different forms of infrastructural violence: spatial isolation, political exclusion, and school segregation, supported at the County and local levels manifested in New Cassel. Ultimately, these processes of infrastructural violence and isolation made New Cassel subject to swift and brutal police action on April 9, 1968, after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., that effectively froze the movement of Black New Cassel residents.²²

The third chapter interrogates how these different forms of race-based isolation made policing more efficiently weaponized against the Civil Rights Movement in suburban space. It makes the argument that there is a clear connection between County goals and the isolation and exclusion of Black communities. It prefaces the events of April 9, 1968, by detailing different struggles led by Black residents of New Cassel for representation on local government boards crucial in zoning policy decisions that threatened to downzone residential areas of New Cassel for industrial use by the neighboring predominantly white town of Old Westbury, like the Water and Fire Commission, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It also discusses the systemic exclusion of Black pupils from by detailing the creation of a separate school building that would further divide the white and Black student population in Westbury and New Cassel, and

²² *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY). "28 Held in Nassau Incidents." April 10, 1968, 65. Accessed December 16, 2021. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713725753>.

the creation of the Nassau County BOCES program in 1968, which evolved into a “dumping ground” for Black children labeled with behavioral or criminal problems and closed a population of schoolchildren completely off from access to a quality education.²³

The chapter concludes by highlighting how, in 1993, the Nassau County Board of Supervisors was declared unconstitutional by a U.S. Federal District Court and disbanded on account of failing to adequately represent minority interests in County decision making.²⁴ This landmark court decision proves decades later what this thesis aims to prove was actively happening in not only County government but also local politics, schools, and housing – the exclusion of Black residents from crucial decision-making processes that impact and reframe the future development of space they have carved out as uniquely theirs within the boundaries of white suburban service society. These boundaries were established first by segregated housing patterns and later cemented by power held on the Board of Supervisors, which adopted an iteration of the Banzhaf index, a weighted voting system that in theory equalized voting power across districts with disparate populations, but in practice created a power vacuum for white homeowners to have their interests centered and fiercely defended at the highest level of County government.²⁵ The theorist who came up with the Banzhaf index has stated publicly that Nassau County has misused and misrepresented his concept.²⁶ Policing was used to bolster and maintain order at the boundaries between white suburban service society and the lower-income Black enclaves that provided these services, and later Black-middle

²³ Martin Buskin, "Growing Pains of a Special School System," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), August 17, 1972, 124, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714718608>.

²⁴ John T. McQuiston, "Nassau Board Is Overturned By U.S. Judge," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), April 15, 1993, 1, accessed December 15, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/04/15/nyregion/nassau-board-is-overturned-by-us-judge.html>.

²⁵ John T. McQuiston, "Nassau Board Is Overturned By U.S. Judge," 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

class neighborhoods who felt entitled to, yet were still denied, the service functions of suburban space.

Woven throughout each chapter is *Newsday* coverage of civil disorder and protest that took place across Nassau County suburbs in the wake of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in April 1968. This article illuminates private business, citizen, and police response in the wake of disorder threatening to encroach upon white suburban space, and highlights the violent convergence of social, economic, and political exclusion, especially in New Cassel. On the evening of April 9, 1968, incidents reported across Nassau provoked the mobilization of a police plan of force and isolation in the event of a riot, resulting in 28 arrests.²⁷ This plan had been under construction since Francis B. Looney inherited office in 1966, and mobilized over 1,000 uniformed NCPD officers to conduct increased patrols across Nassau County's "10 poverty areas," equipped them with new weapons intended for riot control such as mace, designed barrack-fitted basements in private businesses stocked with guns and riot gear, and made the control of public disorder a top priority of the department.²⁸ These incidents provoked an organized and swift police response that varied in size but was present in all 10 predominantly Black neighborhoods in Nassau County, as well as 6 of their cautiously adjacent white neighboring towns. The events in 1968 were Nassau County's first of widespread violence; however, it is evident that Commissioner Francis Looney and his Department had been preparing since his appointment, having inherited a police department that was equipped to defend the boundaries of white suburban space in the

²⁷ *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY). "28 Held in Nassau Incidents." April 10, 1968, 65. Accessed December 16, 2021. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713725753>.

²⁸ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 65. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

event of organized Black resistance and protest during the early vocal stages of the Civil Rights Era on Long Island.

Primary sources related to the experiences, desires, victories, and defeats of Black suburbanites in Nassau County were found in ProQuest History Vault's *NAACP Papers Collection*. Spanning the 19th and 20th century, this collection features documents circulated and regarding activities led by the NAACP's Central Long Island, Freeport-Roosevelt, and Great Neck-Manhasset-Port Washington-Roslyn branches and Long Island Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) from the years 1954 to 1964. Primary documents detailing police and white suburbanite perspectives are largely sourced from newspaper articles in *Newsday* and NCPD publications. *Newsday* is a newspaper published in Nassau and Suffolk Counties since 1940, widely known for its focus on Long Island issues, voices, and opinions. The bulk of these articles are dated between 1960 and 1970 and offer in-depth coverage of these processes of isolation. *Newsday* sources also provide contemporary discussion of topics surrounding the Civil Rights Movement such as school and housing integration, neighborhood zoning, and policing that illuminate how these concepts are understood and come to fruition in suburban space.

This work also relies on information from Nassau County Police Department Anniversary publications from 1975 and 1988 made available via scan from the Joan and Donald E. Axinn Library at Hofstra University, and editions of *Signal One* from the years 1966 to 1976. The Department's Special Anniversary publications provided a detailed history of the organization's expansion from the department's inception in 1925 to 1988. In this reflection on their growth, the 1975 and 1988 NCPD Special Anniversary

publications give clear insight into how police at the time perceived their efforts and impact on Nassau County, and their overwhelmingly positive overtones suggest that the Department successfully achieved the goals they strategized at the outset of each decade. *Signal One* was a quarterly journal published by the Department in the 1960s and 1970s. It gives a more detailed outline of the incentives and goals of the police department during each year, familiarizes officers with developments in the penal code, and provides social commentary on contemporary hot-button issues like organized crime, maintaining law and order in the 1960s, and the relationship between youth and authority figures. These two sources work well together to form an image of the popular social and political narrative among white residents and Nassau County police officers.

This thesis also builds itself upon a combination of histories of urban policing and suburbanization in the United States, hoping to meld these two together and paint a clearer picture of how policing functions and affects Black residents in suburban space. Historians of urban policing in the wake of Johnson's Federal War on Crime and Poverty, such as Elizabeth Hinton, argues that resources siphoned into American localities under Johnson to fund the expansion of social welfare systems were used to fund the expansion of militant police departments, private prisons, and carceral solutions to social problems. Beginning in the late 1960s, police departments began to establish themselves in the spaces that had been vacated by War on Poverty programs.²⁹ Johnson's War on Poverty was predicated on Black Americans' assumed predisposition to crime, poverty, and disorder. It painted Black communities, especially low-income communities, as problems

²⁹ Hinton, Elizabeth *From the War On Poverty to the War On Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration In America*, 13.

that needed containment rather than support. These efforts to “control and contain troublesome groups with patrol, surveillance, and penal strategies,” Hinton asserts, “produced a new and historically distinct phenomenon in the United States.”³⁰ The valorization of those who practiced individualism and the criminalization of those who needed social and economic support created a clear juxtaposition between white suburbs and predominantly Black ‘inner cities.’ These initiatives continued to develop out of the 1960s and into the 1980s under Ronald Reagan’s administration, but these programs simply worked to expand the power and apparatus of the carceral state instead of addressing and putting an end to any kind of crime. Applying carceral and increased surveillance solutions to predominantly Black neighborhoods experiencing poverty made residents more susceptible to criminalization, incarceration, and isolation. More importantly, in the suburban context, it ostracizes Black residents from their white neighbors who are empowered to experience the service side of the suburbs and suburban policing.

In his article “Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space,” Mike Davis also illuminates the history of Johnsons War on Crime and Poverty, its foundations in white paternalism and how it influenced the infrastructural development of Los Angeles during urban renewal, where from 1960 to 1964, policymakers envisioned redevelopment of the central city which was up until that point untouched by developers due to the presence of public transportation infrastructure and low-income riders ‘eroding’ the property values of that area.³¹ After the 1965 Watts Rebellion, LA’s Centropolis plan

³⁰ Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*, 25-26.

³¹ Davis, Mike. “Fortress L.A.,” in *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future In Los Angeles*. London: Verso, 2006. <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy.library.upenn.edu/2027/heb.01817>. EPUB.

was immediately scrapped, and city workers removed pedestrian links (crosswalks, foot bridges, sidewalks, parks, etc.) from city center and established police-patrolled barricades between the new rising downtown LA (Bunker Hill) and fundamentally severed any kind of social overlap between the two distinct class groups that LA housed: one that they wanted to attract and one that had been there before.³² LAPD also published scare literature about imminent gang invasion by Black teenagers and spread it among remaining businesses and residents, prompting those who could to leave the area.³³ Businesses left as their consumers did, and Black and Brown residents of Los Angeles were left with skeleton infrastructure both socially and physically. Low-income Black and Brown residents also continued to be heavily surveilled and criminalized for using public spaces within their neighborhoods for survival purposes (sleeping, eating, meeting, earning money, etc.) and prevented from accessing resources outside of the boundaries LA and LAPD had established after 1965. At the same time, downtown LA neighborhoods along Broadway and Spring Streets to Bunker Hill were the site of new private investment that would attract and reestablish the city at the forefront of progress after deindustrialization.³⁴ Within urban space, during the Civil Rights Era, Davis makes clear that the city found ways to enhance the experience of those they deemed deserving of full social citizenship and mobility while withholding those same rights to those deemed disorderly and unworthy.

In Kevin Kruse and Tom Sugrue's introduction to *The New Suburban History*, they assert that "any effort to understand modern America must put suburbs at the center.

³² Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles," 221-65.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

The two are inseparable.”³⁵ *The New Suburban History*, through a collection of essays by various suburban histories, aims to recreate the image of American suburbia and include stories of those Black, working-class, and other communities of color that were traditionally excluded from the field of suburban history.³⁶ The essays function to highlight how the overarching themes of proximity, race, and class impact the resources and capital one has access to, and therefore how their experience within physical space is shaped. The result of “drawing hard municipal boundaries” that operated under different leadership “created a distinct form of spatialized inequality in the United States.”³⁷ These authors aim to highlight the ways in which lines of division in suburban space are informed by race and class, as well as the way these divisions are informed by patterns in nearby cities. Essays included in this book operate from a “metropolitan framework,” which defines town/local governments, city governments, and federal government as interconnected entities that are dependent on and in conversation with each other.³⁸

By tying stories of the expansion of urban police departments that began during Johnson’s Federal War on Crime and War on Poverty within Kruse and Sugrue’s metropolitan framework, this thesis hopes to illustrate how suburban policing bolsters and is bolstered by the borders that residential patterns of segregation in Nassau County create, enabling them to swiftly isolate and surveil Black enclaves. Suburban policing is also deeply influenced by the events and police responses of the Civil Rights Era, even as some claim the effects of these battles were not felt outside metropolitan boundaries. As

³⁵ Kruse, Kevin Michael and Sugrue, Tom. 2007. *The New Suburban History*, 2. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

³⁶ Stone cobblers, rail workers, landscapers, electric workers, etc.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 6.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 1.

the 1960s eroded federal legal protections for segregating white suburban space, Nassau County suburbs fought fiercely to maintain their individual rights to the hyper-segregated environment they built by funding and supporting a rapidly militarizing police force to use in their defense. The rising social importance of the police also enabled departments like the NCPD to consolidate political power and influence over County legislative decisions and expenditures. The official incorporation of police officers into the folds of full, suburban citizenship at the peak of the Civil Rights Era only further implies that white suburban citizenship is built upon and rewards the complete exclusion of Black people.

This thesis demonstrates how, amidst a flurry of federal, county, and local investment and empowerment from 1954 to 1971, the Nassau County Police Department was able to grow and function to isolate, restrict, and disenfranchise working- and middle-class Black communities. The department's pursuit of these goals was shaped and supported by other institutional endeavors to exclude Black residents from full citizenship in suburban space. From school programs to police benevolent associations, Black residents worked to create their own vision of suburban life where they could actively participate in traditional expressions of community organizations. They also created these organizations because they had been continuously denied participation in their whiter, more well-funded counterparts across Nassau County. It incorporates the works of Elizabeth Hinton and Colin Gordon to draw connections between federal, state, and local expansions of the carceral state in cities and suburbs, illuminating how suburbs in Nassau County used the example of nearby New York City in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement and at the beginning of NYC's fiscal crisis to inform how they

approached policing and how important it was to restrict the movement and growth of Black enclaves within close proximity of white suburban space.

The Department's phases of operational and social growth corresponded with an environment of fear among white suburbanites that they would be forced to interact with Black Americans as equals in a space they had built upon white supremacy, and that police would lose their grip on law and order as Black Americans existed more conspicuously in suburban space. A perceived dichotomy between Black neighborhoods as "little Harlems" – chaotic and squalid – and orderly white suburbs grew stronger in Nassau County during the 1960s and the Civil Rights Era, and the Nassau County Police Department emerged as the suburbs line of defense.³⁹ Through efficiently restricting the movement and expression of Black enclaves, which developed in the social and physical periphery of suburban space, *especially* in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, the Department earned a status of unquestionable legitimacy in Nassau County.

³⁹ Thomas A. Johnson and Harvey Aronson, "Ghettos, Gilded and Grimy," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 8, 1966, 88, accessed December 15, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713315229>.

CHAPTER ONE: Order Maintained, Dreams Denied

In 1975, the Nassau County Police Department published a 50th Anniversary book detailing the creation, expansion, and legacy of the department on Long Island.⁴⁰ They reflect on the success of their department in protecting the residents of Nassau County from falling into disorder, especially during the 1960s, after landmark federal decisions threatened to fundamentally alter the makeup of suburban space. Under Commissioner John Beckmann (1945 – 1961), the Department reorganized to become representative of dominant suburban society, performing service functions for the overwhelmingly white, incorporated residential developments dotting the landscape, new highways that fed them, and shielding suburbanites from the perceived physical and moral disorders that existed in predominantly Black unincorporated townships, as well as the racial and economic tensions brewing in the city just 30 miles away from 1954 to 1961. The department also boasts that under James J. Kelly (1961 – 1966) and Francis B. Looney (1966 – 1971), “Nassau County was fortunate enough to experience relatively few incidents” during the Civil Rights Era from 1962 to 1970.⁴¹ Under the leadership of Louis J. Frank, the department bravely stepped forward into the early and mid-70s equipped to continue the national wars on poverty, crime, and drugs.

Despite Frank and the NCPD's reflection on the period in the *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary* special edition, Nassau County, like other suburban counties across the country, was a hotbed for Civil Rights activity during the 1960s. During the 1940s and 50s, the number of Black Americans in suburbs across the

⁴⁰ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

⁴¹ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 63. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

US rose from 1.5 to 2.5 million.⁴² In Nassau County, insufficient low-income housing for non-whites coupled with rampant discrimination in the housing market led to the concentration of Black residents into substandard and peripheral living conditions. Landowners and developers were empowered to build substandard housing for Black renters, because as of 1963, only the Town of Huntington, City of Glen Cove, and Villages of Hempstead, Freeport, and Rockville Centre had passed enforceable building and housing codes in their local governments.⁴³ In other towns, amenities such as toilets, hot water, and "habitable space," went unchecked in old homes and restricted inspections to new buildings.⁴⁴ However, in 1963, housing code emerged as a "prerequisite for federal urban renewal," and more towns were considering adopting a code for this reason.⁴⁵

In the 1950s, middle-class Black families became the predominant group of new suburbanites. In their attempts to integrate into and enjoy suburban space, they found themselves isolated and concentrated into the same neighborhoods, many of which seemed to have insufficient infrastructure to support the suburban dream Black middle-class Americans were seeking out. These desires and aspirations were considered separate from and different than mainstream Civil Rights Era demands and reframed in the context of popular conservative homeowners' politics. In the 1960s, middle-class Black families in Nassau County defined their citizenship and goals of the Civil Rights Movement within the context of suburban space -- they wanted to access and enjoy it in

⁴² Wiese

⁴³ Newsday, "Experts Give Blueprint for Battle on LI Slums," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), March 1, 1963, 89, accessed January 3, 2022, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/712717663>.

⁴⁴ Newsday, "Experts Give," 89.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

the same way it was advertised, and in the same way they saw white residents and visitors enjoy Long Island. They had been, throughout the 1950s and early 60s, denied participation in politics, denied enrollment in public schools, denied fair and equal housing, denied jobs for which they were qualified, and denied the right to take part in the leisure social activities and clubs that dotted Nassau County's North and South shores. Despite their demands and how well they might have articulated them, 1963 discrimination laws only barred the practice in 15% of Long Island.⁴⁶ Chairman Lincoln Lynch of Long Island CORE articulated that some of the issues, especially pertaining to slum redevelopment and low-income housing, could only be completely solved with greater self-help among poor and working-class Black residents.⁴⁷ Unlike the progressive civic associations that had formed in predominantly middle-class neighborhoods such as New Cassel, Roosevelt, and Manhasset, Lynch suggests, like many advocates for Johnson's War on Poverty and Crime initiatives, that living in conditions of poverty and in slums is in part the fault of Black people themselves, who are perceived as incapable of "learn[ing] how to live."⁴⁸ Instead of providing access to safe and equitable housing, approaches such as the "Hope Corps" concept, which enlisted volunteers from the NAACP and CORE to "teach slum tenants to improve their own substandard living conditions" highlight the fact that both white Long Island officials and large, middle-class, Black civil rights organizations both shared, in some ways, a paternalistic attitude that demanded compliance from poor Black residents and claimed authority over their futures and their mobility.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Despite their middle-class status, these desires were met with pushback at the institutional level that reinforced the idea that suburban space was constructed and bolstered by the exclusion of Black residents regardless of their socioeconomic status. The Long Beach NAACP fought to push an open-housing law through at a June 1968 Long Beach City Council meeting, which "would be the first such law in Nassau County."⁵⁰ While councilmembers Dennis Kealy, Isaac Dubow, and Alan Miesel voiced to *Newsday* that they were not in opposition to open-housing ordinances and that "some improvement is possible and necessary," they also felt that something should be done to "address ... the many problems of the poor," alluding to City Council's preparations and incentives to receive federal aid for slum clearance.⁵¹ Councilman Dubow also suggested that "[t]hese people," in reference to the NAACP and Long Beach Human Relations Commission, their supporters, and their constituents -- Black residents of Long Beach, "have to have more money before an open housing law can mean anything" revealing his perceptions of the Black residents he governed, the seemingly irrefutable link between poverty and Blackness, and ultimately the power that wealthier white suburbanites had in determining the future of citizenship for Black residents of both working and middle-class status in Nassau County.⁵²

The second and third chapters will discuss further the wide net of social infrastructure that was forged between the NCPD, Nassau County local governments and public institutions, as well as private businesses during the Civil Rights Movement and their suburban War on Desegregation. This chapter will illustrate, through the

⁵⁰ Brian Barrett, "NAACP to Ask Open Housing in Long Beach," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), June 10, 1968, 15, accessed January 3, 2022, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713859423>.

⁵¹ Barrett, "NAACP to Ask Open," 15.

⁵² *Ibid.*

departmental and operational expansion of the NCPD, how the Department grew to become a militarized unit equipped to defend and protect the boundaries of white suburban space from collapsing at important inflection points such as the population booms of the 1940s and 50s, the peak of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, and throughout the Federal War on Crime and Poverty.

The Department's narrative blurs the image of Black working and middle-class suburbanites asserting their right to exist in suburban space and being systematically denied by their white neighbors and the NCPD during the Civil Rights Era. Black suburbanites organized themselves both formally – establishing CORE and NAACP Chapters – and informally, setting up coalitions of teachers and homeowners outside institutional channels to bargain and demonstrate for the rights of Black Americans to full citizenship in Nassau County. At the same time, the Nassau County Police Department and wider white suburbia viewed the emerging Civil Rights Movement as a threat to law and order. Outbreaks of disorder, looting, and violence at Civil Rights demonstrations in 1964 and 1968 in New York City and other metropolitan centers across the country stimulated federal and local responses that financed the expansion of a militarized police force with extensive social surveillance capabilities. Concurrently, state and federal level Civil Rights Era reforms like the Voting Rights and Fair Housing Act of 1964 legally enfranchised Black Americans to move into and become active participants in suburban space.⁵³ As Black Americans more actively participated in trends of suburbanization dominating the 1960s and early 1970s, white suburbanites and the NCPD conspired to

⁵³ Gordon, Colin. "Introduction" In *Citizen Brown: Race, Democracy, and Inequality in the St. Louis Suburbs*, 1-20. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/10.7208/9780226647517-002>

aggressively supplement their lines of defense. While the County Board of Supervisors, local governments and school boards fiercely fought during these two decades to keep Black residents out of white suburban institutions, the NCPD recorded a peak of 5,000 employees at the end of 1975, 1,000 of which were civilians.⁵⁴

Before 1925, 38 local police departments operated and enforced the law in independent townships and villages, and investigative and arrest duties were performed by the County Sheriff's office.⁵⁵ These police departments consolidated to take over the daily, ancillary functions of County government, such as traffic patrol, without overlapping jurisdictions. Independent police forces also retained some autonomy, as the County police department's financing structure divides it into two units – Headquarters and District – providing specialized services at the County level using County property taxes through the Headquarters Division and offering supplemental uniformed officers to local departments in areas they don't patrol, financed by the property tax dollars of that specific area.⁵⁶ In July 1925, the newly formed Nassau County Police Department established its First, Second, and Third Precincts, patrolling the areas east of Elmont Road to the Suffolk County line and south of Hempstead Turnpike, north of Hempstead Tpke. to the eastern boundary of Oyster Bay, and north of Hempstead Tpke. to the present-day Wantagh State Parkway, respectively.⁵⁷ These precincts grew as Nassau County incorporated new villages like East Williston in 1926, and Roosevelt and Great Neck in 1927.⁵⁸ By 1955, the NCPD patrolled six precincts, with much of the First still

⁵⁴ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 88. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

⁵⁵ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 9. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

⁵⁶ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 9.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

“covering a sizable portion of the County, in effect, everything east of Rockville Centre and south of Hempstead Turnpike, except for Freeport.”⁵⁹

The Nassau County Police Department was officially established on April 16th, 1925, as the County’s population expanded, spurring the Board of Supervisors to centralize County functions, service its incorporated populations, and formalize its own institutions.⁶⁰ Late industrialization in the late 19th and early 20th century permanently fragmented ties between employee and workplace, disrupting the spatial connection between workers and their place of work and causing them to move further out of cities.⁶¹ New Deal era reforms introduced between 1933 and 1939 were targeted at expanding and standardizing American access to homeownership, especially for working-class and low-income families concentrated at the center or outskirts of established city and county limits. As a result of these reforms, Nassau County’s population grew from 303,053 in 1930 to 406,748 in 1940.⁶²

Nassau County, New York		Nassau County, New York	
White	97.27% 294,769	White	96.67% 393,213
Black	2.63% 7,960	Black	3.25% 13,226

Demographic Shifts in Nassau County, 1930-1940⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid, 43.

⁶⁰ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 10

⁶¹ Gordon, Colin. "Introduction" In *Citizen Brown: Race, Democracy, and Inequality in the St. Louis Suburbs*, 1-20. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/10.7208/9780226647517-002>

⁶² Racial Demographics of Nassau County, 1930-1940, map, Social Explorer, December 16, 2021, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.socialexplorer.com/a9676d974c/explore>.

⁶³ Racial Demographics of Nassau County, 1930-1940, map, Social Explorer.

Demographically, the county remained 97% white over the same period, reflecting the presence of another motivation behind early suburbanization – white flight.⁶⁴ The first wave of the Great Migration brought more than one-and-a-half million Black Americans from the rural South to industrialized urban centers in Northern states, especially New York. The new presence of Black people in previously legal white-only spaces catalyzed a wave of white migrants out of the city and into newly developing suburbs in Westchester and Nassau Counties. With them, these white residents took their capital, labor skills, and an entitlement to boundaries within which white supremacy would continue to be upheld in social, political, and economic spheres. Over time, the Nassau County Police Department positioned itself as an aid in white resistance to desegregation and other forms of social change that threatened to reshape physical and social suburban space throughout the 20th century.

As the end of World War II and FDR’s GI Bill facilitated the migration of millions of middle and working-class veteran families to American suburbs, “the core of the post-war departmental expansion” in Nassau County, “was the explosive population growth and its attendant demand for increased services.”⁶⁵ The population of Nassau County doubled from 672,000 in 1950 to 1,300,700 in 1960, and the Department felt that they should grow at the same pace..⁶⁶ From 1945 to 1961, Commissioner John Beckmann focused heavily on reforming training programs, expanding recruitment programs, and preparing the department to protect the newfound property rights of hundreds of thousands of Americans. Under Beckmann, the police department underwent expansions

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 37.

⁶⁶ Nassau County Executive's Office, "HISTORY OF NASSAU COUNTY," Nassau County, New York, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3344/History-of-Nassau-County>.

and reformations that professionalized and formally institutionalized the force in Nassau County.

The department readily equipped themselves to defend the social order and boundaries of the growing suburban community, and a county of overwhelmingly white suburbanites showed that a dominant goal of the 1950s was to preserve white supremacy in their institutions and within their borders. Despite being subject to the concurrent rapidly expanding police observation and control, Black residents independently organized among themselves and sympathizers to their cause to have their voices heard within suburban institutions that explicitly promoted white supremacy and Black exclusion. In March 1955, the Levittown Teachers' Association hosted a fundraiser minstrel show despite public objections voiced in *Newsday* from the Anti-Defamation League, NAACP, B'nai B'rith, and the grassroots Committee to End Discrimination in Levittown.⁶⁷ Black residents organized to stop the show, or at the very least eliminate the use of blackface, highlighting that "this type of entertainment presents the Negro in a ridiculous and undignified light."⁶⁸ Despite its racist history, the Levittown Teachers' Association heralded minstrel as a "recognized form of American art."⁶⁹

This incident is one of many illuminating how racism was engrained in, normalized, and practiced at the institutional level in Nassau County. In this early example, it became clear that as suburbs built their exclusive and enviable façade, the discomfort and exclusion of Black communities was required in order for white suburbanites to access and enjoy full citizenship in the suburbs. As a result, the police

⁶⁷ Jim Hadjin, "Thumbs-Down Reviews Fail to Halt L'town Minstrel Show," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 2, 1955, 10, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/711383628>.

⁶⁸ Hadjin, "Thumbs-Down Reviews," 10.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

department and white communities entered the 1960s with the goal of maintaining and defending the established boundaries of strictly white suburban space. Although the PD got new incentives and aid to infiltrate, surveil, and further disrupt Black communities during the Federal War on Crime and Poverty of the 1960s, the NCPD had long been preparing as they fought along white suburbanites in the War on Desegregation.

Amidst this rapid population expansion over the course of 15 years, the Nassau County Police Department created 11 new official departments and programs, including the Air and Marine Bureaus, and their expansion was sponsored as much by the federal government as the exploding white population and County Board of Supervisors. Before Johnson's War on Crime and Poverty, the NCPD was also participating in a larger trend of police professionalization that was reshaped, expanded, and strengthened local police departments across the United States.⁷⁰ The police professionalization movement led police departments nationally to formalize, consolidate, and expand their functions to greater exercise order and control in American society.

Consequently, "[t]he more of everything theme that dominated the 1950s drew the department into several areas of citizen service not directly associated with its crime prevention and order maintenance functions."⁷¹ The Nassau County Police Department's mission within the boundaries of white suburban space was to offer services that would, on one hand, target, restrict, and ultimately bar Black people from access. However, this imbalanced access meant that the movement of white suburbanites was encouraged and

⁷⁰ Hinton, Elizabeth, and Deanza Cook. "The Mass Criminalization of Black Americans: A Historical Overview." *Annual Review of Criminology*, no. 4 (June 29, 2020): 261-86. Accessed December 16, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-060520-033306>.

⁷¹ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 48. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

more easily facilitated, empowering white suburbanites to exercise full citizenship because of others were denied it. For example, during Beckmann's tenure, the NCPD launched the Courtesy Patrol – station wagons equipped with gas, flares, and tools for minor repairs that maintained a 24-hour patrol of the Long Island Expressway ready to assist drivers potentially in trouble.⁷²

This movement empowered the NCPD to legitimize itself as an institution essential to the order maintenance functions of Nassau County suburbs.⁷³ The police professionalization movement not only legitimized the NCPD as an institution in form, but it also positioned the department to adopt the goals of other legitimate institutions. In form with other legitimate and power-wielding institutions on Long Island, such as teachers' associations, the Board of Supervisors and Executive's Office, and homeowner's associations, the Nassau County Police Department had to also clearly assert that their goal was to aid in the exclusion of Black people from socially enforced boundaries that defined white suburban space in Nassau.

The NCPD also felt the need to prepare for the 1960s after findings published in their 1956 Annual report, which “contained a ten-year felony crime report survey that clearly showed a steadily rising degree of crime which, as it turned out, was to be the pattern of the times, both locally and nationally.”⁷⁴ White suburbanites expressed concerns surrounding an increase in the incidence of robbery, vehicle theft, and vandalism, and the Nassau County Police Department reports confirm that property-

⁷² Ibid, 48.

⁷³ Hinton, Elizabeth, and Deanza Cook. "The Mass Criminalization of Black Americans, 261-86.

⁷⁴ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 47. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

related crimes and robberies had all increased in the last year in Nassau County.⁷⁵ Many of these incidents were believed to be committed by organized criminals, as they exercised significant influence over the informal and formal economy of New York during the 1930s and 40s.⁷⁶

Organized crime found its way across the boundaries of suburban space in Nassau County, but residents and police officers alike believed that organized crime could “be eliminated entirely,” unlike the “natural” crimes of society like robbery and burglary.⁷⁷ According to *Newsday* column writer Sydney J. Harris, “robbery and burglary can be kept down, but a certain percentage of the population will always try to get something for nothing.”⁷⁸ Even though robbery and burglary are only some of the offenses that fall under the umbrella of organized crime, there was a particular apathy about a select percentage of the population who were perceived to be predisposed to a life of violence, poverty, and therefore commit crime. In the face of new crime as well as the “crime you’ve always had,” Beckmann prioritized ensuring that officers were trained to both respond to crime as well as surveil communities in pursuit of crime prevention.⁷⁹

With more manpower, the department oversaw the enlargement of their physical infrastructure, expanding their Headquarters and training facilities as well as the technology and vehicles they had access to. In 1958, the expansion of the Headquarters

⁷⁵ "It's Possible to Stop Big City Crime," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), July 17, 1959, 28, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/711984757/?terms=%22crime%22&match=1>.

⁷⁶ WILLIAM K. RASHBAUM, "Longshoremen and the mob: When violence and corruption ruled the Brooklyn waterfront," *New York Daily News* (New York, NY), August 14, 2017, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/violence-corruption-ruled-brooklyn-waterfront-article-1.811574>.

⁷⁷ "It's Possible to Stop Big City Crime," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), July 17, 1959, 28, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/711984757/?terms=%22crime%22&match=1>.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

campus to nearly double its size "provided the needed physical space to accommodate further reorganization, consolidation, and expansion of department elements."⁸⁰ More manpower also meant that more families were dependent on the NCPD for their income, and therefore invested in the larger project of keeping perceived proponents of “crime” outside of County limits. Not only did more police families begin to dot the landscape of working- and middle-class enclaves across Nassau, but the power in numbers also meant that the Department could strengthen and use its power as a bargaining agent with the County.

As a result of Beckmann’s efforts, the Nassau County Police Department emerged at the beginning of the 1960s as a formal, legitimate institution. The department’s expansion complemented trends of population growth that were massively altering the landscape of once rural Nassau County and invited new, white homeowners into the boundaries of suburban space with open arms and an oath to protect them and their property from potential encroachment. The Civil Rights Era was quiet in Nassau County suburbs according to the police department, but *Newsday* coverage of NAACP and CORE demonstrations and advocacy throughout the early and mid 1960s uncovers a different narrative – one that contextualizes the expansion of the NCPD during the 1960s in response to demands from a growing Black community willing to disrupt the façade of perfect suburban society to highlight the problems that they face. The police department’s operations under Kelly and Looney worked to ostracize and isolate these Black enclaves in Nassau County, and clarify further the distinctions between neighborhoods, and people, who deserved service and those who deserved policing. President Lyndon B.

⁸⁰ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 45. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

Johnson's War on Crime and Poverty flooded the Nassau County Police Department with funding and rhetoric that made it easier for them to continue resistance to desegregation without using the language of race, making the systematic exclusions of Black Americans in suburban space less conspicuous and more sinister.

In 1961, Commissioner Beckmann passed away in a mysterious drowning incident, leaving the department with an absence of leadership.⁸¹ Interim chief Andrew Kirk occupied the position during the County Executive race, and in 1962, newly elected Executive Eugene Nickerson appointed James J. Kelly.⁸² Commissioner James J. Kelly became the first Commissioner to receive appointment after building his career outside the Department, having previously been in the FBI.⁸³ Kelly took Beckmann's preparations for the events of the 60s and coupled them with his awareness of FBI goals and directives of the late 1950s, as well as the expansive infrastructure now available to the department. In the late 1950s, *Newsday* popularized two of many crime reports published by the FBI in 1956 and 58, warning police departments of an increase in non-violent crimes, especially among 'urban youth.'⁸⁴ From 1962 to 1965, Commissioner Kelly used the context of the Civil Rights Movement to continue Beckmann's mission of improve the department's reputation and status while also allowing for the incidents of police violence to take place because a swift and militarized response at organized protests and sit-ins gave white Americans a clearer confidence that the NCPD was

⁸¹ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 51.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁸⁴ Pat Herman, "Child Crime in Nassau 'Grossly Exaggerated' Gulotta Tells Federation," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), March 29, 1956, 48, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/711550555/?terms=%22crime%22&match=1.>; Juvenile Crime Up 55%, FBI Reports," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 23, 1958, 7, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/711861505/?terms=%22crime%22&match=1.>

defending the boundaries of white suburban space. While preparations were made by the department for their presence at riots, strikes, and other disturbances, there were relatively few documented incidents of violent rebellion within Black suburban enclaves. The potential of it happening, however, is the rhetoric the Nassau County Police Department uses to continue its infiltration into the woven fabric of towns and villages.

Black suburbanites' growing organized demands to be included in formal suburban institutions constituted the potential for rebellion in the eyes of the Nassau County Police Department. During a school board meeting in September of 1963, 200 Black residents from Malverne and Lakeview protested school segregation.⁸⁵ This demonstration, at which residents stood together and sang "We Shall Overcome," was a part of a larger network of protests, sit-ins, and business boycotts led by various Nassau County chapters of the NAACP against school and housing segregation in predominantly Black enclaves in 1963.⁸⁶ At Malverne Junior High, three Black residents, including the president of the Lakeview NAACP Branch, staged a sit-in and were arrested on charges of disorderly conduct, which the Superintendent Clement Wolff and police sources say were "based on the sit-ins refusal to leave the building after they had been ordered to by Wolff."⁸⁷ From the superintendent's orders to the police's arrests, the goal of Nassau County institutions at every level is to control and penalize Black people for daring to exist in suburban space.

⁸⁵ Ken Byerly and Richard Kwartler, "3 Sit-Ins Arrested in School," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), September 11, 1963, 3, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/712716719>.

⁸⁶ Byerly and Kwartler, "3 Sit-Ins," 3.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

The movement to integrate schools in Nassau County was framed as “the integration battle” in *Newsday* articles.⁸⁸ These articles also tallied arrests as though they were reporting casualties during a war. Indeed, white Nassau County residents and the NCPD formed an alliance in the suburban War on Desegregation immediately after the Department underwent a massive structural expansion and could readily execute County goals. By September 11, 1963, this war had so far claimed the freedom of 20 people.⁸⁹ White suburbanites perceived a demand for the integration and improvement of Black public schools as a continuous assault on their right to practice segregation within the boundaries of suburban space and within their suburban institutions. As Black suburbanites continued to move to suburbs and challenge the implied permanent racial hierarchy of the suburbs, white residents mobilized their police force as an arm of defense against this assault.

These arrests came after five more in Malverne six days prior on September 5th, 1963.⁹⁰ Four Black mothers staged a sit-in demanding to enroll their children at the new, segregated Davidson Avenue School in the Malverne School District.⁹¹ They were told by principal Ray Blank “I want you to know that you have no right here,” an explicit assertion detailing exactly how white Nassau County residents felt and acted towards their Black neighbors during the Civil Rights Era.⁹² It is also a testament to how they wanted their suburbs to be policed. They saw Civil Rights demonstrations, and Black residents, as public disturbances and criminalized their presence in spaces they wanted

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Jim Hadjin and Dave Rosenbluth, "Five More Arrested at Malverne," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), September 5, 1963, 3, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/712712814>.

⁹¹ Hadjin and Rosenbluth, "Five More," 3.

⁹² Ibid.

protect under the flag of white supremacy. Arrested alongside the mothers was the employment chairman of Long Island Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), Harold Trent.⁹³ During the peak of the Civil Rights Movement, Long Island CORE collaborated with the NAACP to organize dozens of county-wide protests, sit-ins, and boycotts against segregation, especially in schools and jobs, on Long Island. They met hardened and armored resistance from the surrounding community and the growing Nassau County Police Department.

In the heat of the summer of 1964, Black residents of Harlem in New York City expressed frustrations with economic and political disenfranchisement, lack of affordable housing and jobs, and police brutality in a 6-day long series of demonstrations that rocked parts of the city with looting and property destruction. These race riots, which lasted from July 16th to July 22nd, 1964, along with others across American cities, came to define the later half of the Civil Rights Movement and prompted state and federal responses that expanded the surveillance and isolation capabilities of a rapidly militarizing police force.⁹⁴ Despite police reflections on this year as a calm and orderly period, Black suburbanites also organized in the summer of 1964 to publicly assert their rights to adequate schools, housing, and access to full citizenship and declare a formal end to racism in Nassau County. From July 28th to August 6th, 1964, CORE led a publicized picketing campaign against Vigilante Associates.⁹⁵ These protests came after CORE submitted a complaint reporting the firm for practicing discrimination when

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Hansi Lo Wang, "New York's 'Night Of Birmingham Horror' Sparked A Summer Of Riots," NPR, last modified July 18, 2014, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2014/07/18/330108773/new-yorks-night-of-birmingham-horror-sparked-a-summer-of-riots>.

⁹⁵ Ron Wencer, "Order Prevails in Hicksville after a Summer of Violence," Hix News, last modified November 2019, accessed December 16, 2021, <http://hixnews.com/1911/Hixtory.htm>.

showing housing options to prospective buyers, contributing to the patterns of hyper segregation on Long Island that continued to weather the storm of the Civil Rights Movement.⁹⁶ Long Island CORE President Lincoln Lynch and majority white protestors were met by police show of force and a crowd counter-protestors wielding signs that displayed offensive tag lines and racial slurs such as “Go Home Monkeys!”⁹⁷ “Special police forces” arrived in riot vans wearing steel helmets, pushing forward the image of soldiers going to battle to defend segregation.⁹⁸ During the counter-protest, onlookers and participants sometimes injected to voice their support for Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater.⁹⁹ In this moment, these two groups stood diametrically opposed as the hardlines between law and order and desegregation politics visibly cemented. The prevalence of racial slurs also highlights how despite an overwhelming white presence at the CORE picket, the face and scapegoat of the disruptive Civil Rights Movement would always be Black.

Jail 2 in Attack on Pickets

Two members of an egg-and rock-throwing crowd of young white men counterdemonstrating against a CORE picket line in Hicksville, L.I., were arrested last night when they started heaving things at the cops.

The clash occurred in front of the Vigilant Realty Co., 234 Old Country Road, which CORE has been picketing for six days in support of a demand that the company rent homes and apartments to Negroes on an “open occupancy” basis.

Police escorted the pickets’ safely to their cars.

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As pickets continued throughout the week, counterprotest sizes swelled from seven to nine hundred as white families traveled with their children to jeer at and terrorize the

⁹⁶ Wencer, "Order Prevails," Hix News.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

group of CORE activists.¹⁰¹ When some of these anti-CORE picketers were blocked from and arrested for assaulting CORE members and their supporters by the police, they threw garbage, glass, and yelled “Who are you for? The N—rs?” at officers.¹⁰² These officers, in their steel helmets, bulletproof vests and shields equipped with metal batons and firearms had been requested on the battlefield to fight *for* these segregationists. White reactions to the police’s betrayal of their social contract in this moment do more to illuminate what white suburbanites believed the conditions of that social contract to be – to defend segregation and brutalize Black Americans for demanding access to suburban space. Meanwhile, other CORE officials met with the County Executive’s Office to discuss their 8-Point Plan to end racial bias in Nassau.¹⁰³ They also met with representatives from Vigilant Associations in Mineola, whereafter Vigilant and all brokerages in Nassau were required to adhere to New York State Law Against Discrimination.¹⁰⁴ They also published advertisements in Newsday regarding how to submit claims of discrimination to the Nassau County Commission on Human Rights.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Two of the signs carried by anti-CORE pickets, about half of whom were young boys, contained the word "niggers," which was banned from use on signs by police Monday night because of the possibility of a riot. One of the two signs read: "To Hell With CORE, Join SPONGE. Society for the Prevention of Niggers Getting Everything." Chief Insp. Francis Looney said the word was permitted because conditions last night were not as inflammatory as on Monday. Later, the word on that sign was changed to "Negroes." Looney estimated the crowd at about 1,000 persons. Nassau County Police Commissioner James J. Kelly was also at the scene.

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"The Long Island Real Estate Board continues to pledge its lawful compliance with the State Law Against Discrimination. Any prospective purchaser who believes that he has been discriminated against because of race, creed, color or national origin in answering any advertisement for real estate in Nassau County is urged to communicate with Farrell Jones, executive director, Nassau County Commission on Human Rights, Pioneer 2-3000, Ext. 2448."

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After the summer of 1964, concern about unrest spilling over into suburban boundaries was still heavy on the minds of police officers and white suburbanites alike. The hot-button topic of law-and-order would continue to dominate election rhetoric at all levels in Nassau County, from federal to local school board elections. During the late 1960s, Commissioner Kelly and then Deputy Commissioner Francis B. Looney attempted to formulate and implement programs which, on the surface, had the intention of promoting dialogue and increasing interactions between predominantly Black suburbs that were often so defined and controlled by their boundaries.

"The program's goals were to establish a dialogue with people, community leaders and groups; to acquaint people, particularly in areas where language and social

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

barriers demand attention, with police policies and responsibilities; to help defuse potentially hot situations; to provide Commanding Officers with vital assessments of community mood and opinion ... During these tense moments of the 1960's, the Bureau was a vital element in maintaining the excellent reputation of the department in local minority communities" (*Fiftieth Anniversary: Nassau County Police Department*, p. 62)

Throughout the covered and mentioned published histories given by the Nassau County Police Department, the decades of the 1950s and 1960s are always referred to as “tense moments” and “moods of violence.”¹⁰⁸ This vague vernacular reveals not only NCPD perspective on events at the time and upon reflection, but also the limited role that the Civil Rights Movement plays in the larger history of Nassau County. This exclusion and silence speak volumes to the NCPD, County government, and white suburbanites’ desire to keep and remember Nassau County as a strictly white suburb. Within their own published histories, the Department reveals that they also perceived the Civil Rights Movement as “radical, social, and militant dissent,” “in many instances directed against the police officer,” and that a new trend in targeted crimes against police officers “dictated a response by authorities.”¹⁰⁹¹¹⁰ The use of the word “dissent” functions to juxtapose the protests and riots of the Civil Rights Movement against the law and order of the police and the state. Police officers felt and prepared for these so-called tense moments as if they were a matter of life or death, even though by the end of 1975, “6 members of the NCPD had been killed in the ‘Line of Duty.’”¹¹¹ They did, however, leverage this fear and use it as justification for their mistreatment and intimidation of Black residents.

¹⁰⁸ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 62. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

¹⁰⁹ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 72.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 89.

After an accident rendered him no longer able to serve, Commissioner Kelly resigned and appointed Francis B. Looney to replace him in office.¹¹² Looney is considered one of the most prolific Commissioners to ever head the Department, as he led his forces through the late 1960s and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., among other prolific Civil Rights leaders. Upon his formal appointment in 1966, Chief Commissioner Francis B. Looney had already witnessed the outcome of the 1964 Summer Riots in New York City, and handled the outbreak of anti-segregation protests in Nassau County that same year. The boundaries between ‘safe’ white suburbs and ‘dangerous’ Black ghettos became more clearly defined by where Civil Rights activity was happening and where it was blocked from spilling over into. During Looney’s tenure, the Department secured more funding that enabled them to continue their project of increasing public contact, enmeshing themselves within the social fabric of Nassau County, and enforcing the boundaries that white suburbanites and the NCPD forged between peaceful and orderly suburbs and the riotous neighborhoods Black Americans occupied.

With millions of federal dollars available to aid Nassau County’s local war on crime and poverty, Chief Commissioner Looney established the new Crime Prevention Unit in 1967.¹¹³ This unit trained seasoned patrolman and prepared them for quick and brutal response in the event of a large civil disturbance of any kind.¹¹⁴ The patrolmen enlisted in the Crime Prevention Unit all volunteered to be on this special task force.¹¹⁵ While the NCPD had already been devoting financial and personnel resources to the restriction of

¹¹² Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 62. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

¹¹³ Nassau County Police Department and Reginald Ballard, "The Crime Prevention Unit," *Signal One*, Spring 1971, 6, PDF.

¹¹⁴ Nassau County Police Department and Ballard, "The Crime," 6.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

order disturbance within the boundaries of suburban space since 1925, Looney's Crime Prevention Unit formally integrated this function into the growing apparatus of the department. Federal rhetoric and aid targeted at strengthening local police riot response after the summer riots of 1964 also equipped the Nassau County Police Department with the language of wartime. According to a *Signal One* article reporting on the success of this program, these men patrolled during the "high-crime-incidence time-period," which the NCPD does not define, but statistics reflect an increase in arrests-per-month related to burglary, robbery, and auto theft from 6 per month in August 1967 to 82 per month in February 1971.¹¹⁶ Each Crime Prevention Unit officers "carries his personal riot helmet and jumpsuit in a special bag," which men "jump into when assembled at a disturbance."¹¹⁷ The language used by police to describe their duties echoes that of soldiers entering the battlefield. They perceived themselves and demonstrations led by Black Civil Rights Movement leaders as diametrically opposed forces, and the police emphasized the need to prepare themselves to fiercely restrict Black suburbanites' expression of sentiments inspired by the Civil Rights Movement from infiltrating the boundaries of white suburban space.

Under Commissioner Looney, the NCPD established social in addition to their institutional legitimacy, ardently support the County-wide goal of socialization with the purpose of surveillance in Black communities. There was a special focus on Black youth who, unlike their parents, could not compare the racism that existed in the suburbs to the horrors and devastation of the Jim Crow South. While their parents certainly aspired to be treated in a neighborly and respectable manner by their white neighbors, suburban Black

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 7.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 8.

youths especially demanded this respect from their peers, neighbors, and the police. At a 1967 youth community program meeting, Black Inwood teenagers expressed that they were treated in a manner “that no white person sees” by police, citing experiences of being followed when entering the boundaries of white suburban space – the neighboring towns of Hewlett, Lawrence, and Cedarhurst.¹¹⁸

They were watched and treated as second-class citizens despite crossing no real border, and the society around them had the unwavering expectation that Black residents, especially Black youths, were troublesome and dangerous. Youth-police community centers were seldom perceived as a safe haven and did not work to address community needs. Police reportedly patrolled their own youth program meeting that night because the meeting had been spontaneously planned and registered on police radars as a potential riot. To add insult to injury, none of youths’ concerns were corroborated by police, but officers present at the meeting “understand how the community feels.”¹¹⁹ Despite their valid fears, anxieties, and frustrations, these Black teenagers could not validate their experiences to police in the context of massive swaths of crime data being produced and publicized at the time, such as the 1965 Moynihan Report, painting Black Americans and their pathological as well as material conditions, as a major proponent of crime.¹²⁰ There was no quantitative data available to show the impact of being perceived, watched, and treated like a criminal on Black people.

¹¹⁸ Glenn Padnick, "Inwood Negroes Clear the Air," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), July 27, 1967, 74, accessed December 16, 2021, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/713721360/>.

¹¹⁹ Padnick, "Inwood Negroes," 74.

¹²⁰ Daniel Geary, "The Moynihan Report: An Annotated Edition," *The Atlantic*, last modified September 2015, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-moynihan-report-an-annotated-edition/404632/>.

After the news of Martin Luther King’s assassination reached Long Island suburbs on April 9, 1968, incidents of civil disorder broke out in Nassau County’s black enclaves. *Newsday* reported on these incidents – which took place across Hempstead, Roosevelt, Hicksville, New Cassel, and Uniondale – and the damage to property as well as anxiety the events caused for neighbors. After store windows were broken, fires started, and Black protesters took the streets, Looney and his men entered the ‘battle’ they had been physically and rhetorically arming up for.¹²¹ The events that took place on from April 9-10, 1968, called for the Department to crack open a “two-inch thick loose-leaf book entitled ‘Plan for Mobilization of Force’” carefully crafted, “stamped ‘confidential’ and kept in a locked drawer” by Commissioner Looney.¹²² Details shared with *Newsday* about the plan suggest that there were provisions made for the deployment of 1,000 officers across 16 Nassau County communities, and that within these communities were established “command centers,” housed in the basements and back rooms of local private businesses who established partnership with the police.¹²³ In these rooms, there was storage available for weapons and riot gear, in the event of a mass outbreak of violence.¹²⁴ Even after hundreds of officers were dispatched to patrol, make arrests, and reestablish order in these neighborhoods on their days off or outside of their precincts, *Newsday* asserted that the police showed “obvious restraint” and only used some tear gas in New Cassel despite now having mace, “a new gas designed to stun its victims,” available to them.¹²⁵

¹²¹ "28 Held in Nassau Incidents," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 10, 1968, 65, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713725753>.

¹²² "28 Held," 65.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

1968 serves as an important inflection point for all actors involved in the long suburban War on Desegregation: white suburbanites and the Nassau County Police Department would only continue to accumulate and spend resources towards the efforts of isolating and ostracizing Black enclaves, and excluding them from white suburban space and its formal institutions. 1968 Penal Law designated new procedures for Offenses Against the Public Order and in effect legally enfranchised police officers to restrict and put a stop to any expression of demonstration that could be deemed publicly offensive or disruptive.¹²⁶ As a result of the adjustments to penal law, white supremacist cops and residents were now legally empowered to call the cops on and report Black Americans for arbitrary offenses against disrupting the peace of suburban society. In effect, Nassau County laws moved to enfranchise white residents to restrict access to First Amendment rights to expression and assembly from Black suburbanites. White residents perceived, at varying degrees, the presence of Black people and Black activism in Nassau County as disruptive to the fragile infrastructure of the suburbs, which relied on white supremacy. These new laws, as explained in a Spring 1968 edition of *Signal One*, “serve them [officers] well in efforts to preserve the peace and prevent crime.”¹²⁷ These laws effectively enabled police officers to act swifter and with more authority, giving them the opportunity to individually determine, according to some guidelines, what constituted a public disturbance. They regrouped offenses related to Disorderly Conduct, Harassment, and Loitering under Violations and assigned harsher fines and punishments for those suspected of criminally organizing. These violations outlined

¹²⁶ Nassau County Police Department and James R. Ketcham, "OFFENSES AGAINST PUBLIC ORDER IN THE NEW REVISED PENAL LAW," *Signal One*, January/February 1968, PDF.

¹²⁷ Nassau County Police Department and James R. Ketcham, "OFFENSES AGAINST PUBLIC ORDER IN THE NEW REVISED PENAL LAW," January/February 1968.

vague classifications for crimes such as disturbing a meeting, congregating in a public place, unreasonable noise, loitering in “any place under any circumstances that create suspicion of criminal activity and... failing to satisfactory explanation to a peace officer.”¹²⁸

The 1968 adjustments to Penal Law vastly expanded the police’s authority to exercise judgment and determine what and *who* exhibited suspicious of criminal behavior in a field situation. In their procedure outlines, the police assume and demand an unquestionable obedience from potential suspects, otherwise subjecting them to further investigation and police harassment. The new laws also gave specific identifications and arrest procedures for riots, which the Department had clearly been preparing plans for since the early 1960s. They outlined degrees of rioting and their respective punishments from misdemeanor to felony. These classifications were dependent on the size and “effects of prohibitable conduct.”¹²⁹ For example, a riot of “at least 11 people” was considered most serious and a Class E felony under the 1968 Penal Law adjustments.¹³⁰ In their reflection on the adoption of these new measures by the County Board of Supervisors, the NCPD praises the BoS for officially giving them “broader investigatory confrontation authority than the Stop and Frisk Law” in New York City.¹³¹ The suburbs wanted to fight for their right to white supremacy, and were willing to offer their police the right to wield greater authority than the NYPD because the white suburbanites advocating for these reforms also understood that they would be used only to repress Black suburbanites and keep them out of the social boundaries of white suburban space.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

The declining fiscal and aesthetic state of New York City when compared to Nassau going into the 1970s, was evidence to suburbanites that the city's militarized boundaries (see: police) against the waves of black migrants that arrives during the First (1910-1940) and Second Great Migration (1945-1970) were not strong enough. It was, in fact, reflective of the capital departure that occurred in New York and other major cities during the 1950s and 60s, partially resulting from white flight to the suburbs.¹³² However, white suburbanites took the New York's impending 1970's fiscal crisis as a sign to grant their police force more authority in the hopes of building more impermeable borders of segregation in Nassau, more strictly isolating and surveilling the Black communities that already existed there..

By February 1971, the Crime Prevention Unit enlisted 134 patrolmen.¹³³ These officers patrolled the NCPD's eight precincts in nine-man teams, "instantly available to assist anyone, any place and in any manner."¹³⁴ Community-police programs expanded to enlist the participation of local civilians in varying degrees of police activities, from surveillance to patrol. Like the Community Relations Bureau, these programs were funded largely by over \$2 million in federal grants made available to the Nassau County Police Department as outlined in the Omnibus Crime and Safe Streets Act of 1968.¹³⁵ The details and impacts of the department's social expansion both within and outside of the institution, by establishing police-private business partnerships and the Police

¹³²Elizabeth Hinton and Deanza Cook, "The Mass Criminalization of Black Americans: A Historical Overview," *Annual Review of Criminology*, no. 4 (June 29, 2020), accessed December 16, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-060520-033306>.

¹³³ Nassau County Police Department and Reginald Ballard, "The Crime Prevention Unit," *Signal One*, Spring 1971, 8, PDF.

¹³⁴ Nassau County Police Department and Reginald Ballard, "The Crime Prevention Unit," 9.

¹³⁵ Nassau County Police Department. *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary*, p. 61. Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975. PDF.

Benevolent Association, will be analyzed in the next chapter as a part of the larger narrative about the network of social and cultural capital the NCPD accumulated during the 1960s and how it aided both police and the wider white community in the exclusion of Black Americans from Nassau County and her institutions.

From 1954 to 1971, the department completed two phases of expansion that corresponded with two massive waves of population growth in Nassau County. The first wave of expansion targeted the problems of legitimacy and organization that the department faced; they found ways to expand their arsenal of vehicles, weapons, and personnel and render the services and protection that new migrants to the suburbs were demanding, felt entitled to, and had state and local protections for – at the expense of excluding access to those services from Black suburban migrants. As those protections eroded, however, white suburbanites still relied on the police in Nassau County to maintain the social boundaries of segregation long after their physical legacies faded from leases, HOA contracts, and deed covenants. The cost of expanding the Department, per its founding financing structure, fell squarely on the shoulders of Black residents as well, who were represented by white town and County supervisors who demanded more police in those areas so that they might be better isolated, observed, and controlled. These neighborhoods subsidized a County, local and supplements to a local police force that had directives and motivations to punish – not serve – them. Before the Civil Rights Movement ushered in an era that began the national War on Crime and War on Poverty, Nassau County residents and the NCPD were already fighting a War on Desegregation that targeted and relentlessly punished Black Americans for daring to exist in white suburban space. During and after the Civil Rights Era, Black residents continued to be

denied their right to full citizenship as humans or even as homeowners in suburban space, because the social boundaries had been long drawn around Nassau County declaring it white. Parallel to their project of operational expansion, the Nassau County Police Department also launched an aggressive campaign to establish social legitimacy in the 1960s and fought to finally be included within the boundaries of white suburban space. These programs did little to increase rates of minority recruitment but made strides in establishing another network through which the NCPD could isolate and surveil Black neighborhoods.

CHAPTER TWO: Mutually Beneficial Agreements: Social Expansion of the NCPD, 1954-71

“In our Republic, ‘Law and Order’ does not suppress all human traits and capabilities in the name of social survival. History teaches us that social order is an essential ingredient in a free progressive civilization; but we are living in a period of time when defiance of authority is becoming the norm.”¹³⁶

In this quote from a 1969 edition of *Signal One*, the Nassau County Police Department continues their official support of the law-and-order campaign in popular politics, stressing that the “thin blue line” of police officers and their civilian aides was the only thing defending suburbs from descending into the comparative anarchy that cities experienced during and after the Civil Rights Era. According to crime statistics published the previous year in 1968, the efforts of the NCPD during the Civil Rights Era were working: all violent crime arrests were down.¹³⁷ However, the department faced a new crime problem: narcotics arrests had been up 120% from 1967 to 1968.¹³⁸ The Department urged vigilance, attempting to rally the troops with rhetoric and statistics that evoked the image of a society preparing for yet another battle on the horizon.

The NCPD began publishing *Signal One* under Commissioner Francis Looney, in which popular conservative social and political messaging about the importance of law and order was entangled with new police procedure and articles detailing the operational expansion and might of the Department in the wake of the War on Poverty, Crime, and the long suburban War on Desegregation. In the mid-to-late 1960s, law and order politics rose to dominate themes of federal, state, and local elections. The brewing Civil Rights

¹³⁶ Nassau County Police Department, "The Neighborhood Security Program," *Signal One*, Spring 1971, 3, PDF.

¹³⁷ Tom Renner and Gurney Williams, "LIers Differ on Term," *Newsday*, September 30, 1968, 11, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713908108>.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

Movement threatened the peace and order of maintaining white supremacy that white homeowners had long enjoyed in their neighborhoods and neighborhoods institutions. Nassau County institutions, like schools and town governments, fought the battle on the home front to exclude Black people from having representation or their voices heard at all on decisions that affected the growth, socialization, and mobility of the Black enclaves that these boards governed. The Nassau County Police Department, in the expansion of its social programming and institutions outside of the department, such as the Nassau County Police Benevolent Association (NCPBA), continued their mission to defend the social and physical boundaries of segregation and excluded Black residents from taking police exams as well as Black officers from joining their PBA. Black officers, when constituted 1.5% of the force in 1977, organized themselves in separate groups with independent financing, namely the Nassau Guardians.¹³⁹

The NCPBA also aligned themselves politically with the Republican Party in the 1960s, endorsing 1964 Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. Goldwater, who had published *The Conscience of a Conservative* four years prior to his presidential campaign, rose to political stardom among white, conservative Republican voters. He empathized with their fears about federal legislation calling for desegregation and the full political and social enfranchisement of Black Americans and proposed that states and localities should retain control over when and how fast their school districts and neighborhoods integrate. Issues like law and order and individual rights came to the

¹³⁹ United States v. Nassau County, No. 9:77-CV-01881, slip op. (Sept. 21, 1977). Accessed December 16, 2021. <https://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/public/EE-NY-0203-0015.pdf>.; African American Police League and National Black Police Association, "National Black Police Association region I files: printed material," ProQuest History Vault, last modified January 1, 1972, accessed December 16, 2021, [https://hvp-proquest-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/historyvault/docview.jsp?folderId=201929-194-0019&q=fulltext%3A%22Nassau%20County%22%20fulltext%3A%22Police%20benevolent%20associati](https://hvp-proquest-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/historyvault/docview.jsp?folderId=201929-194-0019&q=fulltext%3A%22Nassau%20County%22%20fulltext%3A%22Police%20benevolent%20association%22&position=10&numResults=10&numTotalResults=18) on%22&position=10&numResults=10&numTotalResults=18.

forefront of suburban politics as they were denied the right to practice exclusion on the basis on race. Goldwater's candidacy and the rhetoric he massively popularized validated suburbanites' and suburban police departments' concern that the perceived lawlessness and danger of Black residents and their Civil Rights Era demands would spill over into and disrupt white suburban space. "To some of Long Island's [B]lack leaders," however 'law and order' under the banners of Nixon and Wallace means only '[B]lack suppression," dual standards of enforcement for [B]lack [people] and whites and the beginning of a police state to return [B]lack people to bondage."¹⁴⁰ As civil rights continued to dominate American politics into the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Politically and institutionally, the NCPD stood diametrically opposed to the well-being of Black communities in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, and actively participated in the denial of citizenship rights to Black residents.

During the aftermath of a wave of access to mortgage capital for white Americans, which enabled them to invest in homes, Black Americans were still largely excluded from this wealth-building project. Public housing was also seen by several white suburbanites as synonymous with Black Americans, designating them as places for *other kinds* of people, and places to be meticulously controlled and watched. In Nassau County, the "common understanding of the word '*slum*,'" was synonymous with Black residents – a lingering fear from the days of *de facto* segregation, that Black neighbors would cause property values to plummet.¹⁴¹ Opponents of public housing proposals claimed that said plans would "set up a Negro ghetto" in white, homogenous suburbs of Long Island.

¹⁴⁰ Tom Renner and Gurney Williams, "Liers Differ on Term," *Newsday*, September 30, 1968, 11, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713908108>.

¹⁴¹ "The Shame of the Slums," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), February 11, 1963, 56, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/712680320>.

A 1963 edition of *Newsday* exposes the “squalor” that exists on Long Island, highlighting the racial and economic makeup of designated slum areas.¹⁴² While this report may have intended to draw attention to the issue of inadequate and expensive housing for minority and low-income residents, the language, and descriptors function to paint the people associated with these blighted areas in a negative light, rather than drawing attention to the problems that create slums. Areas singled out varied in description but had one factor in common: the presence of Black residents. Conditions in Elmont, according to the police and investigative reporters, were squalid and incongruent with the aesthetic of neatly manicured middle-class suburbs that white homeowners felt entitled to. Indeed, homes in Elmont were “jammed with grooms and other transient race-track personnel” who “from spring through fall” work at the Belmont Racetrack, rendering services that ensure the seamless racetrack experience during the popular betting season and the Belmont Stakes, a popular event for wealthy white families to dress up and spend the day being served by Black employees.¹⁴³ In another article exposing the state of slums in Nassau published three years later in 1966, New Cassel was identified as an area of “split-level poverty,” because the residents are predominantly Black and middle-class, but the demographics of New Cassel made it an attractive and safe neighborhood in which Black middle-class residents and sleep-in domestic workers alike could socialize.¹⁴⁴ In the context of suburban space, the presence of Black residents was enough to earn neighborhoods like New Cassel a reputation of poverty, and white decisionmakers were empowered to overlook the needs of Black residents in slum and

¹⁴² “The Shame,” 56.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Thomas A. Johnson and Harvey Aronson, “Ghettos, Gilded and Grimy,” *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 8, 1966, Page 13W, accessed December 15, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713315229>.

non-slum areas in pursuit of federal aid and grants that would reclaim Black suburban residential space and redevelop it into some that could be of service to white residents.

While the department had always worked to incorporate civilians into its policing efforts to some degree, the 60s and 70s was a period that oversaw the rapid acceleration of the social integration of police. President Johnson had announced the beginning of the War on Crime and Poverty in 1965, two programs which opened floodgates of funding to police departments around the country and empowered them to militarize while simultaneously expanding their social programming. Essentially, the federal government wanted to pursue a dual-pronged approach to crime and poverty: one arm of the approach expanded social welfare infrastructure and laid the groundwork for the rapid expansion of public and affordable housing supply, but the other offered an unforgiving and brutal punishment to Black Americans for any diversion to the social norm of law and order. Both approaches relied on the fundamental assumption that Blackness and Black people, not their violent systematic oppression, were responsible for the slum and crime-ridden conditions that popped up in American cities and now threatened the comfort of the suburbs. Both also relied on the presence of an omnipotent police department that conducted 24-hour surveillance in racially segregated poverty and slum areas that received cooperation from socially accepted citizens in their project of maintaining order. In Nassau County suburbs, socially enforced boundaries asserted with confidence that citizenship was restricted to white homeowners.

Two landmark pieces of federal legislation in the Wars on Crime and Poverty – the Law Enforcement Assistance Act of 1965 and the Omnibus Crime and Safe Streets Acts of 1968 – offered police departments millions of dollars in aid to pursue these federal

goals in their local arenas.¹⁴⁵ In suburbs, this funding was also used for the creation of programs that would assist the department in its operational and riot-control capabilities as well as the development of carefully planned social programs that promoted police-community interactions in already systematically isolated and disenfranchised predominantly Black and low-income pockets of Nassau County.

These social initiatives were led most aggressively under Commissioner Francis B. Looney's tenure, which lasted from 1966 to 1970. Commissioner Looney advertised these programs in newspapers and police pamphlets as a signal that the Department was willing to renegotiate the social contract it stamped out between the police and Black enclaves in Nassau County in exchange for obedience during the Civil Rights Era. These programs also, however, functioned to expand the network of social information available to NCPD officers about Black communities and the habits of the people that inhabited them. They made white police officers, who would otherwise have little to no contact with their Black neighbors, privy to intimate details about their movement. The social expansion of the Nassau County Police Department also functioned to expand their surveillance, isolation, and control capabilities in already systematically isolated and disenfranchised Black enclaves. On April 10, 1968, *Newsday* published an article celebrating swift police action in New Cassel and other suburbs in the aftermath of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination.¹⁴⁶ After chronicling police procedure and events of the night before, the newspaper publicized that this organized and militant police

¹⁴⁵ Elizabeth Hinton and Deanza Cook, "The Mass Criminalization of Black Americans: A Historical Overview," *Annual Review of Criminology*, no. 4 (June 29, 2020), [accessed December 16, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-060520-033306>.

¹⁴⁶ "28 Held in Nassau Incidents," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 10, 1968, 65, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713725753>.

response was a part of a larger riot plan that had been kept under lock and key. This plan indicated that for years, the Nassau County Police Department used the information they accumulated since they began aggressively pursuing social expansion in 1966 to plan ways to better isolate and control Black communities, especially after protests and disorder permeated between previously thought ironclad suburban boundaries.

On January 4th, 1966, the Nassau County Police Department created the Community Relations Bureau.¹⁴⁷ In the department's reflection, this "vital" program was created to establish open communication between police and residents, "particularly in areas where language and social barriers demand attention."¹⁴⁸ The Department also implied that the program enabled them to assess community mood and gauge opinions on the Department and the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁴⁹ At the program's inception, the Bureau was led by a white police officer, under which five Black officers served.¹⁵⁰ According to 1968 department statistics, the Nassau County Police Department was comprised of almost 2,600 patrolmen and officers, 24 of which were Black.¹⁵¹ The Department's Community Relations Bureau grew to membership of 16 by 1968, in tandem with Looney's desire to maintain 'racial harmony' in Nassau County.¹⁵² He wanted to demonstrate that the NCPD was not only expanding, but also using its resources to envelop some Black residents into the larger project of order maintenance in the suburbs. A large part of Commissioner

¹⁴⁷ Nassau County Police Department, "James J. Kelly," in *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary* (Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975), 66, PDF.

¹⁴⁸ Nassau County Police Department, "James J. Kelly," 66.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Jack Altshul, "Casino Men Have Ace in Hole," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), September 8, 1967, 37, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713794173>.

¹⁵¹ Bernie Bookbinder, "The Changing Cop," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), March 23, 1968, 103, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713709040>.

¹⁵² Bernie Bookbinder, "The Changing Cop," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), March 23, 1968, 102, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713709040>.

Looney's administration was defined by seemingly robust attempts to recruit Black officers to the force. He expressed concern that the percentage of Black officers did not reflect the percentage of Black Nassau County residents (3.5%).¹⁵³ He also expressed support for "the Black Power position that Negroes should police the ghetto," believing that more Black cops will produce more trust between the police and the Black community, "who are the most visible symbol of the predominant society."¹⁵⁴

Several local police departments followed suit, as their connection to the County police department enabled access to federal funds made available through federal legislation allocated towards the expansion of state, city, and county police departments, namely the Omnibus Crime and Safe Streets Act of 1968. The Omnibus Crime Bill allocated this funding to police departments across the country on the basis that these departments would institute fair hiring practices, which included addressing the racial discrimination that interested Black applicants faced during the hiring process and later felt as officers on the force. Again, in 1968, the NCPD received a \$45,524 grant under the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act and launched a Community Relations bus tour, occupied by 16 patrolmen driving through predominantly Black neighborhoods like Roosevelt and Inwood to promote recruitment of Black officers.¹⁵⁵ The Community Relations Bus, like many of the other police socialization programs funded and sponsored by Johnson's Great Society, positioned the police officer once again as the primary point of public contact and representative of order within American society. Upon the

¹⁵³ Bernie Bookbinder, "The Changing Cop," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), March 23, 1968, 103, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713709040>.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ "Grants Will Help Police on LI," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), August 28, 1968, 25, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713882114>.

program's announcement, Looney described these neighborhoods as Nassau County's "10 poverty areas," stressing again the irrefutable link that was reforged between perceptions of poverty and perceptions of Blackness during the national War on Poverty.¹⁵⁶

In 1969, the NCPD launched another community policing initiative aimed at increased public contact and participation with the police – the Neighborhood Security Program.¹⁵⁷ This program recruited volunteers from Nassau County families to conduct door-to-door canvasses of their neighborhoods, accompanied by a patrolman, and to be alert to any unusual or dangerous events, hazards, or people.¹⁵⁸ By 1975, the Nassau County Police Department had recruited 260,000 families as a part of the Neighborhood Security Program.¹⁵⁹ The inaugural version of the program was tested in the neighborhoods of East Williston and Hausch Manor, in which the police recruited volunteers and participating families identified themselves with stickers on their windows colored either red, white, or blue.¹⁶⁰ Although Looney insisted that the racial makeup of these communities "had nothing to do with their selection," it seems intentional that this pilot program took place across two communities: one that was a "middle-class white" community and the other "predominately a Negro community."¹⁶¹ It is also worth noting how the Police Department, who published an advertisement for the Neighborhood Security Watch in a June 1969 edition of *Newsday*, use a class marker to define the white neighborhood, while simply referring to Hausch Manor flatly as a Negro

¹⁵⁶ "Grants Will Help Police on LI," 25.

¹⁵⁷ Nassau County Police Department, "Francis B. Looney," in *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary* (Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975), 72, PDF.

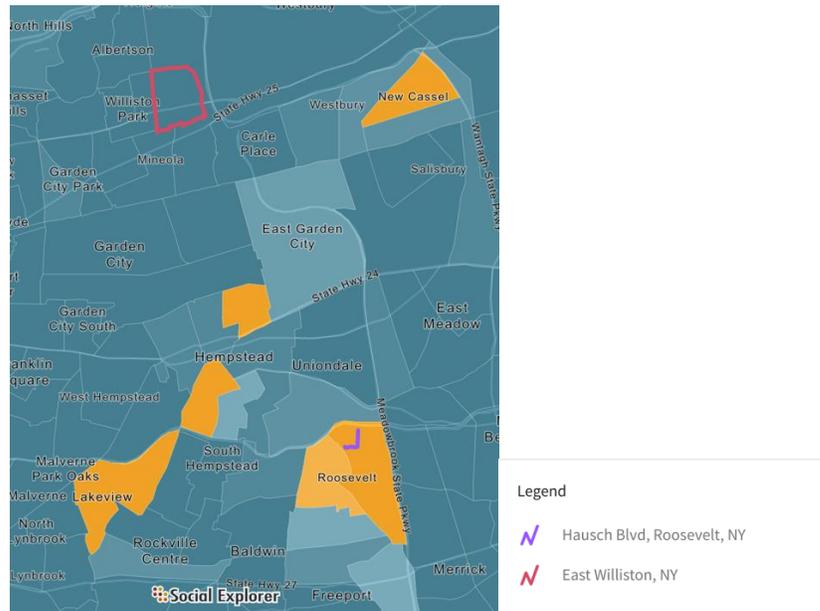
¹⁵⁸ Nassau County Police Department, "Francis B. Looney," 72.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Newsday*, "Crime Alert," 3.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

neighborhood.¹⁶² These two villages are located roughly 5.6 miles away from each other, but their differences spatially, demographically, and descriptively highlight how the Nassau County PD led this Neighborhood Security Program in two vastly different towns in order to deliver two kinds of policing to its white and Black constituents.

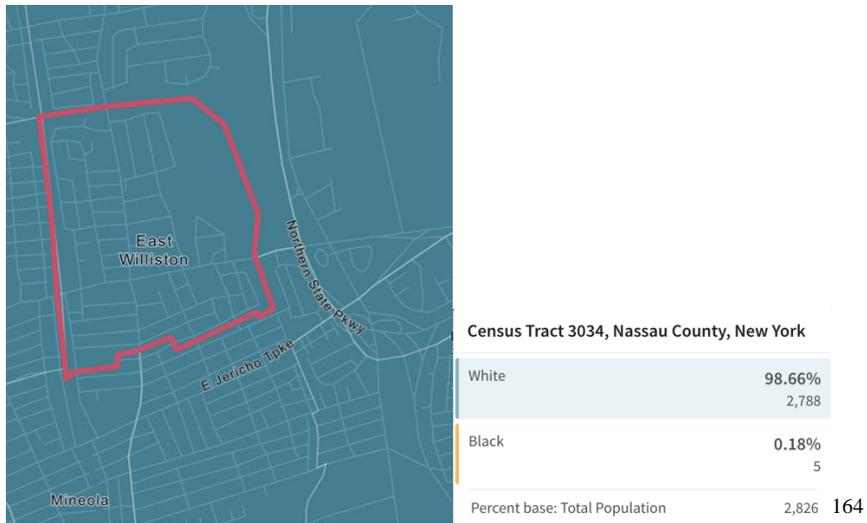


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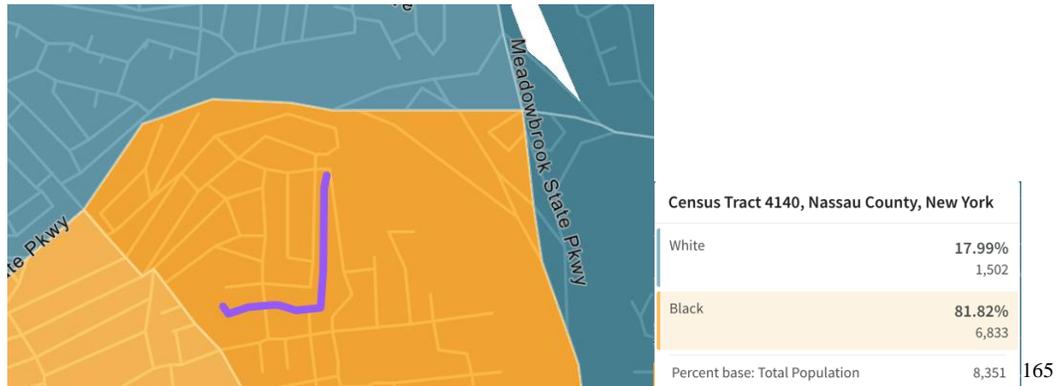
1970 Racial Demographic Map of Nassau County with East Williston and Hausch Blvd, Roosevelt highlighted

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Summer Thomas, 1970 Racial Demographic Map of Nassau County with East Williston and Hausch Blvd, Roosevelt highlighted, map, Social Explorer, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.socialexplorer.com/a9676d974c/explore>.



1970 Map and Racial Demographics of East Williston, NY



1970 Map and Racial Demographics of Hausch Manor, located along Hausch Blvd, Roosevelt, NY

The incorporation of civilian volunteers extended to other functions of the NCPD's apparatus outside of surveillance, including ancillary functions like School Crossing Guards, who fulfilled the duty of increased police contact with schoolchildren and incorporated women into the police's expansion project albeit in gendered roles, and the Automotive Bureau, which were a team of mechanics who provided on-demand service

¹⁶⁴ Thomas, 1970 Racial Demographic Map of Nassau County with East Williston and Hausch Blvd, Roosevelt highlighted, map.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

to police vehicles, enabling officers to continue their 24-hour patrol of Nassau County's ever expanding highways. The NCPD also recruited civilian volunteers in a patrol capacity through their Auxiliary Police program.

Civilian volunteers were celebrated and awarded by the department for their bravery, cementing the reciprocal service and support relationship the NCPD formed with white suburbanites.¹⁶⁶ The Neighborhood Security Program was preceded by other informal 'see something, say something' coalition efforts made between police and white suburbanites. "Look and Listen" initiatives that fostered police-community relations.¹⁶⁷ At the beginning of his tenure as Commissioner, Looney made calls in the newspaper to aid Nassau cops with their problem-oriented policing targets, such as drugs and gangs.¹⁶⁸ He also established public-private partnerships between the police and local businesses in 1968, including a program in which "more than 3,000 two-way radio-equipped vehicles owned by businesses and private citizens," including the Long Island Lighting Company and "most Long Island taxicab companies," and would dispatch an officer immediately when these private businesses and citizens see cause for police action.¹⁶⁹ The program was an extension of Nassau County's campaign to gather community support against the vague yet looming threat of crime. Programs like this had already been modeled in Washington, D.C., California suburbs, and in Suffolk County, and were part of a larger national war on crime and the social expansion of the carceral state.¹⁷⁰ Citizens and

¹⁶⁶ Jackie Hong Chan, "Police Volunteer Day," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), October 1, 1970, 148, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714429594>.

¹⁶⁷ "Nassau Cops Enlist Aid Of Private Radio Cars," *Newsday* (Mineola, NY), June 10, 1968, 15, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713859423>.

¹⁶⁸ "Aid Asked on Dope," *Newsday* (Mineola, NY), March 12, 1966, 7, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713326357>.

¹⁶⁹ "Nassau Cops Enlist Aid Of Private Radio Cars," *Newsday* (Mineola, NY), June 10, 1968, 15, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713859423>.

¹⁷⁰ Nassau Cops," 15.

private businesses were now physically invested in the project of policing Nassau County suburbs and designated crime hot-spot areas became subject to intense surveillance by both the police and civilians, working to isolate and other these communities. This collaboration was also made visible following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., after which private bus services were suspended in the predominantly Black enclave of New Cassel – a form of the social and economic punishments that restrict the movements of Black people in Nassau County for responding to the events of the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁷¹

Other institutions, while not directly associated with policing, still took it upon themselves to police and maintain order among Black residents, especially Black youth. A 1968 incident on the LIRR involved a train conductor removing 75 Head Start youth ages 4 and 5 from an air-conditioned train car that the program reserved to accommodate “regular patrons.”¹⁷² Although the LIRR maintained that race had no influence on the conductor’s actions, Frederick Jones of the Hempstead anti-poverty council emphasized that the same treatment would not have been extended to white children.¹⁷³ There was a racial distinction drawn between Black children and “regular patrons,” and the full-service experience of the LIRR was denied to pre-kindergarten students on account of their race. This incident is indicative of the larger theme that order maintenance functions

¹⁷¹ Special to The New York Times. "20 Negroes are Arrested After Disturbances in Nassau County: FIRES AND LOOTING FLARE IN 6 AREAS Rock Throwing also Erupts -- Day is Quiet in Suffolk and in Westchester." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Apr 10, 1968, <https://proxy.library.upenn.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/historical-newspapers/20-negroes-are-arrested-after-disturbances-nassau/docview/118184843/se-2?accountid=14707> (accessed February 7, 2021).

¹⁷² Gregory Schirmer, "LIRR Says Children Lost Comfort to Regular Riders," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), July 20, 1968, 11, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713894029>.

¹⁷³ Schirmer, "LIRR Says," 11.

of the Nassau County Police Department were reserved primarily for predominantly Black enclaves, and that the objectives of this order maintenance was to restrict the movement of Black people across the county as well as ensure a comfortable, service-style experience that reserved for white residents only. The PD and other institutions collaborated across the 1960s and 1970s in this endeavor to make this racial division clear yet intangible, especially after the peak moments of the Civil Rights Movement.

The Nassau County Patrolmen's Benevolent Association was a crucial factor in maintaining cohesion among the white police force to reaffirm to both officers and the public that police are a necessary function, to ensure that the social and political desires of private citizens were represented as police concerns, and to ultimately cement the NCPD as a legitimate and powerful white organization in the County. Through support from taxpayers, government officials, businesses, and white residents, the PBA was officially recognized as a part of and crucially functional for the maintenance of racial segregation after the Civil Rights Movement.

The Nassau County Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (NCPBA) was founded in July 1928 and its original membership consisted of 49 patrolmen.¹⁷⁴ The organization rose to prominence especially during the 1950s and 1960s and was featured often in the news, documenting secret meetings, picketing demonstrations, and contract negotiations with County government officials. Amidst not only a popular movement of labor unionism but also federal social projects like the War on Crime and Poverty, the Nassau County PBA's collective bargaining power grew as their societal clout did. They designated themselves as an essential means to order maintenance in the County and

¹⁷⁴ Nassau County PBA, "Our History," Nassau County Police Benevolent Association, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://nassaupba.org/our-history/>.

leveraged an environment of conservative fears and white, suburban anxieties related to integration and crime to gain monumental pay hikes and benefits for the force. If the Department was to protect the suburbs, they would also demand to live in them. Politically, officers in the Nassau County PD made a point to align themselves with conservative Republican white homeowners in Nassau County, which made up 55% of the voting population in 1960 according to Presidential election results.¹⁷⁵ This illuminates police officers' political perceptions of the Civil Rights Movement, the issues it raised, and the issues police officers were tasked to deal with.

The Department encountered one of its first official labor struggles in 1955, when legislators introduced Governor William Harriman of New York to a bill which would grant police departments a 5-day 40-hour work week across the state.¹⁷⁶ The bill's 1956 success was the result of organizing efforts led by the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), who fought for police organizations, prison and correctional institution employees, and state troopers to gain avenues for collective bargaining and grievance processing with the state.¹⁷⁷ Formal unionization and bargaining rights came later for police departments because of the institution's history being weaponized against organized labor in the late 19th and early 20th century. A federal wage report published in the Bulletin of the United States cites that "although police employee organizations fulfill the certain functions of a union, they generally are not affiliated with organized labor."¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Summer Thomas, Nassau County Presidential Election Results, 1960, map, Social Explorer, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.socialexplorer.com/a9676d974c/explore>.

¹⁷⁶ "Cops Urge Mayors to Back 5-Day Work Week," *Newsday* (Rockville Centre, NY), April 9, 1955, 17, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/711390237>.

¹⁷⁷ State Police Win Grievance Machinery; Right to Join Employee Groups Assured," *Civil Service Leader: America's Largest Weekly for Public Employees* (Albany, NY), December 18, 1956, 3, <https://studylib.net/doc/14047124/1-i-e-a-d-e-r-harriman-seeks-bipartisan>.

¹⁷⁸ 1958-61 Federal report on fireman and police labor activity and wages

Indeed, the police department was likely more indispensable to suburbs than labor and grew to wield significantly more political and bargaining power than other labor organizations in the County.

Originally represented by their Chief and Commissioner, the Nassau County Police Department had historically been able to receive hundred-dollar-per-year raises at an annual rate, including in 1952 after John Beckmann won officers a \$500 base salary increase for all officers.¹⁷⁹ As the number of officers involved in the PBA grew, more patrolmen were able to voice their concerns, and the force was able to organize as a collective to attain desired goals. With the PBA acting as an unofficial bargaining agent, the Department won further pay increases in 1959 and 1961, raising the base officer salary each time by \$400 and \$900 a year, respectively.¹⁸⁰¹⁸¹ By 1961, patrolmen's salaries started at \$5,600 a year and maxed out after ten years at \$7,400, compared to a national average policeman's salary of \$6,400 a year in cities with a population over 1,000,000.¹⁸²¹⁸³ Despite these consistent wage increases and a robust, 25-year, defined benefit retirement plan, members of the NCPD felt as if they were being left out when other county employees would receive wage or benefit increases and demand more from taxpayers. As the power of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association grew both socially and politically, police officers were able to quickly organize and attack county institutions in order to have their demands met and their political goals supported.

¹⁷⁹ "Pay Fight Crowns 27-Yr Feud," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), December 21, 1956, 29, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/711566163>.

¹⁸⁰ Stan Hinden, "11c Tax Boost in Nassau Budget," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), November 10, 1959, 3, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/711990818/>.

¹⁸¹ Stan Hinden, "Carlino Urges Nassau to Hike Pay to 9,000," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), May 8, 1961, 7, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/712387323/>.

¹⁸² Hinden, "Carlino Urges," 7.

¹⁸³ "FIREMEN AND POLICEMEN, 1924 - 64," *Bureau of Labor and Statistics Wages Bulletin*, April 1965, 2, PDF.

In 1963, County leaders began engaging in discussions surrounding the 1964 county budget and where to allocate taxpayer funds. After fierce negotiations, the NCPD bargained for a 6% annual raise in their new contract with Nassau County.¹⁸⁴ As bargaining processes between the police and the County became more complicated, more publicized, and more important to white suburban citizens, it became clear that the Nassau County Police Department and the Nassau County PBA had grown to establish a social legitimacy within Nassau County's formal institutions and primary interest group (see: white suburbanites). In 1968, the Nassau County Public Employment Relations Board officially recognized the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association as the sole bargaining agent for the countywide police force.¹⁸⁵ Despite their illegitimate status in the sphere of organized labor, the Nassau County PBA gained significant social stature and respect, eventually gaining institutional acknowledgement and acceptance in 1968. During the same period, Black Nassau County residents had their demands for full mobility and citizenship dismissed, and their voices in suburban institutions silenced. It becomes clear, especially in and after the year 1968, who white suburbanites wished to include within the boundaries of their communities, both physically and socially.

Local and institutional support if anything grew more public as the Department transitioned into the early 1970s. To fire back on claims that Nassau County institutions enabled, paid, and above all *ordered* police officers to treat Black residents as second-class citizens, the County declared it illegal in 1969 for the NCPD and PBA to officially

¹⁸⁴ Nassau Police Seek Another Pay Raise," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), June 23, 1964, 15, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/712821665/>.

¹⁸⁵ "Appeals Court Backs Gov on Employe Agent," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), February 14, 1968, 13, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713737081>.

endorse a politician or get publicly involved in a campaign.¹⁸⁶ From 1970-71, County Executive Ralph G. Caso and PBA President Patrolman Edward Lecci entered their first official contract bargaining talks ahead of the 1971 County Budget.¹⁸⁷ The negotiations were, again, highly publicized and became a forefront issue as police officers and sympathizers led picket lines against town and county governments that wouldn't immediately meet their demands.¹⁸⁸ In the previous year 1970, the Nassau County PBA entered renegotiation talks regarding the Department's 1-year contract with the County. PBA President Edward Lecci began negotiations with Democratic County Executive Eugene Nickerson with a laundry list of requests, including a 20% pay hike for members of the force.¹⁸⁹ The County had originally proposed an extension of the Department's previous contract under Democratic Executive Nickerson – a 6% pay hike and increased retirement and legacy pay. The Nassau County Police Department threatened to walk off the job – which concerned both County Government and citizens alike.¹⁹⁰ Although the department never acted on these threats, the mere threat of a society without police was enough to terrorize the psyche of white residents, who had already invested so much into building impenetrable, segregated, suburban borders defended on the front lines by a hyper-militarized police force. The County then proposed an 8% salary increase for patrolmen and cadets, which PBA representatives thought a “good starting point” to

¹⁸⁶ "Nassau Ban on Cops in Politics Is Upheld," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 22, 1970, 23, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714175411>.

¹⁸⁷ Judith Bender, "Nassau Budget: Tax Hike Seen," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), November 9, 1970, 5, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714412286/?terms=police%20%2B%20%22Ralph%20Caso%22&match=1>.

¹⁸⁸ Judith Bender, "Nassau Policemen Agree to Extension of Contract," *Newsday* (Mineola, NY), December 31, 1970, 17, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714381374>.

¹⁸⁹ "Panel Hears PBA-County Pact Dispute," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), October 31, 1969, 22, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714060674>.

¹⁹⁰ Judith Bender, "Nassau Policemen Agree to Extension of Contract," *Newsday* (Mineola, NY), December 31, 1970, 17, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714381374>.

continue negotiations.¹⁹¹ Patrolman and PBA President Edward Lecci reaffirmed that his organization wanted a 24% pay increase.¹⁹²

Ultimately, the PBA's strategy became apparent as different seemingly objective mediators brought in to consult on the disagreement were excluded from private talks and had their recommendations shot down by members of the PBA. 1970 was an election year in Nassau County, and Republican candidate Ralph G. Caso was projected to win the race for County Executive. The results of the 1970 County Executive race were indicative of a larger suburban white population that had remained a conservative stronghold since the 1920s. Eugene Nickerson served as the first and only Democrat to serve as Nassau County Executive until 2002. Below are tables also displaying the results of 1964 and 1968 Presidential races in Nassau County, indicating where the voting community stood on the Civil Rights Movement as it intensified, the social issues it brought up, and the Black people that these social issues largely effected due to systematic isolation and oppression on Long Island.

¹⁹¹ "Cops Decline 8% Proposal," *Newsday* (Mineola, NY), December 29, 1970, 23, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714380936>.

¹⁹² "Cops Decline," 23.

Nassau County, New York	
Democratic vote	60.53% 382,590
Percent base: Total votes cast	632,115

Nassau County, New York	
Democratic vote	43.31% 278,599
Republican vote	51.27% 329,792
Percent base: Total votes cast	643,195 ¹⁹³

1964 and 1968 Presidential election results in Nassau County

After his victory, County Executive Ralph G. Caso constructed a board that consisted of powerful and established Republican leaders in Nassau County and began to tighten his aims around lowering current tax rates and maintaining law and order. He also “gave assurances... to the Police Benevolent Association” that his Board would consider police pay increases higher than 6%, and that if the Department disagrees with a factfinder that suggest one or two points higher than 6%, the County will look for ways to finance police salaries through short-term borrowing.¹⁹⁴ It is important to note as well that the “neutral factfinder” brought in by the County was George J. Scherrer, an executive of the Long Island Lighting Company.¹⁹⁵ In the previous discussion of Nassau

¹⁹³ Summer Thomas, Nassau County 1964 and 1968 Presidential Election Results, map, Social Explorer, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.socialexplorer.com/a9676d974c/explore>.

¹⁹⁴ Judith Bender, "Nassau Budget OK'd; No Tax Hike," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), December 9, 1969, 13, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714171536/?terms=%22Nassau%20Patrolmen%27s%20Benevolent%20Association%22&match=1>.

¹⁹⁵ Judith Bender, "Nassau Policemen Agree to Extension of Contract," *Newsday* (Mineola, NY), December 31, 1970, 17, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714381374>.

County's Neighborhood Security Program, the Long Island Lighting Company was one of the first companies to collaborate with the NCPD in one of its early Look and Listen initiatives, installing two-way police radios in their fleet of light maintenance vans.¹⁹⁶ While electricity utilities and policing objectively have close to nothing to do with each other,

Negotiations came to an agreeable end and, in 1971, the Nassau County Police Department signed a two-year contract with County that granted them a 10% pay increase in the first year and an 8% boost in the second, in addition to improved select fringe benefits such as overtime and holiday pay.¹⁹⁷ This analysis of the relationship and "gentleman's agreement" between the Nassau County Police Benevolent Association and County Executive Ralph G. Caso does not intend to imply that the Nassau County Republican Party was the group of actors with a desire to invest in the expansion of a militarized police force in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁹⁸ Democrats and Republicans of the 1960s alike supported the reestablishment of law and order and expressed concern for or outright disapproval of violent incidents that broke out and came to define the decade. Under the eight years that Nickerson held office (1962-70), County spending increased by 118%.¹⁹⁹ While some of this money went to the expansion of Social Security and Medicaid benefit programs as well as wage increases for County

¹⁹⁶ "Nassau Cops Enlist Aid Of Private Radio Cars," *Newsday* (Mineola, NY), June 10, 1968, 15, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713859423>.

¹⁹⁷ "Policemen in Nassau OK 2-Year Contract," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), February 4, 1971, 17, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714394601/>.

¹⁹⁸ Judith Bender, "Nassau Policemen Agree to Extension of Contract," *Newsday* (Mineola, NY), December 31, 1970, 17, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714381374>.

¹⁹⁹ Judith Bender, "Nassau Budget OK'd; No Tax Hike," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), December 9, 1969, 13, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714171536/?terms=%22Nassau%20Patrolmen%27s%20Benevolent%20Association%22&match=1>.

employees, a hefty portion of the budget continued to be allocated to the Police Department, as illustrated in the cases of 1961 and 1964. This chapter instead aims to illustrate clear-cut examples of the collaboration that existed at the institutional level between the white police force and County government and frame the maintenance of segregation as a uniquely *suburban* goal, not one with a specific party affiliation. The exorbitant annual pay hikes awarded to the Nassau County Police Department on behalf of their PBA's bargaining efforts, in addition to the prevalence in socially supported and funded recreational PBA events, function to highlight just how socially and politically important the institution of the police is in the suburbs of Nassau County. The pay increases themselves collectively also demonstrate just how much the residents of Nassau County were willing to spend in pursuit of 'winning' the war on crime.

The Nassau County PBA's membership and interests in the period of the Civil Rights Movement reflected that of conservative, white suburban police officers who felt their racial and occupational position in society threatened. The few Black policemen in Nassau County and elsewhere in the country had to organize themselves. Many denounced PBA membership because of their local PBA's political affiliations and emphasize that others do the same, especially since the patrolman's benefits are guaranteed to him by the county, city, or state with which he is contracted, and not the police union.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ National Black Policeman's Association, "\$730,000 to WHO, for WHAT, and WHY," *National Black Policeman's Association*, 1968, 42, https://hv-proquest-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/pdfs/201929/201929_194_0019/201929_194_0019_0002_From_51_to_100.pdf.

In the divisive context of the Civil Rights Movement, Black officers were often posed with the question: “*Whose side are you on?*”²⁰¹ As Black officers constituted a very small part of the force, the racial makeup of the PBA remained overwhelmingly white. Black officers were faced with an identity crisis – were they Black or were they cops? Black policemen across the country understood that despite efforts mandated by civil rights legislation passed at the federal and state levels, “[a] policeman is supposed to be white.”²⁰² The central discussion topic of the 1968 Convention of the National Black Policemen Association of New York (NBPBA) was who, or what, Black officers should declare their allegiance to – Black nationalism or law and order.²⁰³

The Nassau Guardians represent the Black policemen of Nassau County at annual NBPBA Conventions. They understood, based on their proximity to their community and personal experiences, that public perception of the police in predominantly minority neighborhoods was akin to a “white occupation army.”²⁰⁴ White officers found it difficult to adapt to integration on the force, despite top-down attempts to increase interactions between Black, white, and Puerto Rican members of the force in New York. On the NYPD, Commissioner Howard Leary (NYPD Commissioner 1966-70) led initiatives such as patrol integration, in which two officers of different races would be paired together for their daily beats with the hope of promoting communication and understanding between groups of people who, outside of the context of the force, may rarely interact with each other. Black police officers thought this initiative “a drag,”

²⁰¹ Barry Cunningham, "Article III: The Black Cop," *Post Daily Magazine* (New York, NY), November 13, 1968, 53, <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=201929-194-0019&accountid=14707>.

²⁰² Cunningham, "Article III," 53.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

emphasizing that it put them in an uncomfortable position for eight hours with people they felt they were “just not compatible” with.²⁰⁵ White NYPD officers perceived attempts to integrate the force as special treatment, expressing concern that promotion opportunities were now being handed out based on race, with years of service now being overlooked.²⁰⁶

Nassau County police officers also responded to the promotion of Black police officers with the reasoning that the decision was made because of “discrimination in reverse.”²⁰⁷ They argued that even though there were many veteran cops on the force with eligibility for promotion, the five Black officers on the Community Relations team were picked because of their race in the social and political climate of the 1960s.²⁰⁸ However, interviewed officials at the Police Department suggested that the climate did have something to do with their decision – just not in the way the Nassau PBA interpreted it.²⁰⁹ The PD strongly believed that the lack of successful protests and riots in the County was due to the “missionary work” done by the officers on the Community Relations Bureau.²¹⁰ Top officials of the NCPD understood the importance of recruiting more Black cops and folding them into both their occupational and social ranks. They could therefore more easily do police work in communities where white police officers lack the ability to appropriately diffuse situations. Instead of highlighting the lack of effective racial sensitivity training among white officers, Black officers instead came to

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Jack Altshul, "Casino Men Have Ace in Hole," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), September 8, 1967, 37, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713794173>.

²⁰⁸ Altshul, "Casino Men Have," 37.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

be further accepted into the official ranks of the Police Department, despite their exclusions from the social extensions of it.

Despite the political crisis these officers faced, Black officers' perceptions surrounding solutions to the issue emphasize the need to *decenter* race, highlighting the influence of the police department as a political institution on the perceptions of the 'race problem' and the Civil Rights Movement. Some felt that, just as Black officers accepted pro-Black attitudes, white cops "are not anti-[B]lack but pro-white," attempting to create a level of equivalency for these attitudes.²¹¹ They asserted that it was "easy to pick up an attitude of disrespect for the [B]lack man" when patrolling predominantly Black neighborhoods.²¹² The physical manifestations of disenfranchisement, exclusion, and poverty were deemed more reflective of a lack of general self-respect among the Black community to officers. These attitudes were also expressed in the description of Nassau County 'slums,' highlighting the close link between American perceptions of Blackness and perceptions of criminality and how it bled into the opinions of self-identifying pro-Black cops across the United States.

Officers in Nassau County expressed similar reactions, especially in the context of CORE and NAACP protest actions and demonstrations advocating for school and housing integration.²¹³ Black officers felt that the central issue was that everyone deserves safe schools and neighborhoods, not that white Americans were purposely creating a hostile environment in which effective integration could not take place.²¹⁴

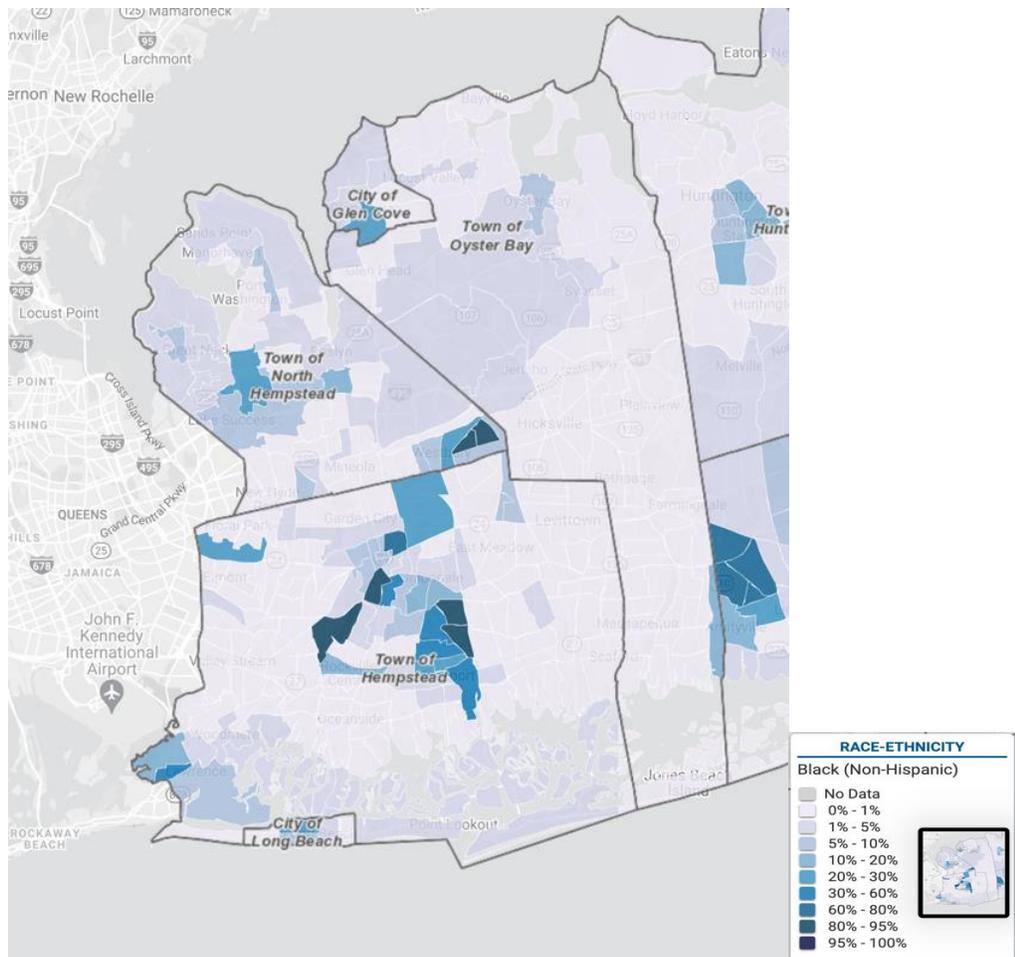
²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ed Lowe, "Racial Tension Key in Some LI Elections," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), May 1, 1970, 31, https://hv-proquest-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/pdfs/009059/009059_008_0568/009059_008_0568_From_1_to_144.pdf.

²¹⁴ Lowe, "Racial Tension," 31.

Although Black police officers in Nassau County collaborated, organized, and fundraised with other Black officers across the country, they ultimately still formed this collective to further the legitimacy of their place within the institution of the police department. They understood that in the context of the Civil Rights Movement, that their identity as both Black and police officer stood in direct opposition of each other, further emphasizing the notion that the function of the institution of the police in Nassau County is to restrict the movement of and oppress Black communities and residents.



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²¹⁵ Center for Urban Research (CUR) at the CUNY Graduate Center, "Long Island's Transformation: 1970-2017; Race/Ethnicity," map, Long Island Index, January 2015, accessed October 22, 2021, <http://historiccensus.longislandindexmaps.org/?latlng=40.754779%2C-73.581999&z=11&variable=pctblacknh&year=1970>.

Long Island Map of Race and Ethnicity, 1970, Center for Urban Research

In 1970, the Bureau launched an advertisement campaign, which included a Community Relations Bus “outfitted with posters, pamphlets, department slide programs” and other recruitment materials. The bus was driven through locales that would “generate incentive in minority recruitment.”²¹⁶ The launch of this bus campaign also coordinated with the establishment of community relations booths in Roosevelt and Inwood.²¹⁷ The Nassau County Police Department of 1975 acknowledges that these efforts were a part of “the increasing effort to further racial harmony during those often-troubled times” of the Civil Rights Movement.²¹⁸

The department acknowledged that racial tension and frustrations underscored the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, but their reflection fails to acknowledge the historical movement by name. It does, however, highlight the ways in which the Civil Rights Movement informed actions and responses of police in suburbs, and that they were aware of its potential reverberations. Although the department used funding to make surface level improvements to their department and shed light on their new approach to diversity, by 1977, the department was still 1.5% Black.²¹⁹ Despite little tangible impact on the racial configuration of the Department, the Community Relations efforts of Francis Looney and ACI Louis J. Frank led to an increase in police presence and surveillance in Nassau neighborhoods under the guise of crime prevention. They were especially successful in enveloping white residents, young and old, into their mission, as these

²¹⁶ Nassau County Police Department, “James J. Kelly,” in *Nassau County Police Department: Fiftieth Anniversary* (Garden City, NY: Nassau County Police Department, 1975), 62, PDF.

²¹⁷ Nassau County Police Department, “James J. Kelly,” 62.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *United States of America v. Nassau County*, No. 9:77-CV-01881, slip op. at 2 (Dec. 18, 2019). <https://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/public/EE-NY-0203-0015.pdf>.

groups were all collectively invested in the maintenance of racial segregation in Nassau County and its institutions. As the Civil Rights Movement brought change from the top-down to the racial and economic structure of these institutions, Black police officers still understood the paradox that their two identities – the mere fact that they are two identities – posed in the context of the Civil Rights Movement, and in the context of the history of the police in the United States.

Through participating in the process of spatial isolation and social disenfranchisement against Black communities in Nassau County, the NCPD completed their goals of gaining social and institutional legitimacy. While Black Civil Rights leaders and community members in Nassau County are denied acknowledgement of their movement and their movement's demands, including a seat at the decision-making table in Nassau County institutions, the Nassau County Police Department and the Nassau County Police Benevolent Association gain the political and social power to have their demands and goals influence public opinion. They were now included more formally within the rigid social boundaries of suburbs for their role in upholding segregation, especially during a period when the practice was being violently challenged and there were white fears that the Civil Rights Era would destroy the white utopia that suburban space represented to them.

Chapter Three: Battlefield in the Periphery: Systematic Exclusion and Punitive Policing of Black Suburbanites, a Case Study of New Cassel 1954-71

After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Nassau County found itself experiencing the spillover effects of boiling frustrations that had been simmering in Black communities and stifled by white suburbanites and suburban institutions over the course of the 1960s. 28 Black residents were arrested on April 10, 1968 in the predominantly Black neighborhoods of Hempstead, Freeport, and New Cassel for lighting trash cans on fire, throwing Molotov cocktails and rocks at passing motorists, and demanding that drivers “turn on their automobile lights in honor of Dr. King.”²²⁰ The next day, Police Commissioner Francis Looney ordered the NCPD to barricade 20 blocks in the town of New Cassel on its main thoroughfare, Prospect Avenue.²²¹ A spokesman for the private bus company that transported Black New Cassel residents to and from work suspended rush hour bus service in the area, demonstrating continued collaboration and support between private companies and the police with the goal of punishing and isolating low-income and minority enclaves.²²² After arguably minor disturbances succeeding a traumatic milestone event in the history of the Civil Rights Movement, NCPD officers were able to suspend the movement of New Cassel residents, demonstrating the fact that they functioned to deny full citizenship to Black suburbanites to assure those same rights to white Nassau County residents.

The Nassau County Police Department was also handed the infrastructure they needed to police New Cassel and majority Black enclaves like it with such efficiency and

²²⁰ "28 Held in Nassau Incidents," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 10, 1968, 65, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713725753>.

²²¹ "28 Held," 65.

²²² Paul Leventhal, "For 1st Time, Cops Use Plan Against Disorder," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 10, 1968, 65, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713725753>.

force because of an ecosystem of housing, politics and schools that had been under construction for nearly three decades prior to 1968. This ecosystem, and a foundational basis, was built upon white suburbanites' desire to accrue and protect the wealth they were building in their suburbs. Exclusion of their Black neighbors from their de facto white institutions ensured that the social problems associated with Blackness could continue to go unaddressed because they did not affect their white communities. A combination of public and private actors forced New Cassel's Black residents into homes along the same 1.5 square mile plot in the middle of Westbury. Shoddy rentals were packed with working-class Black families paying exorbitant rents to absentee landlords and living in unsanitary and unrenovated, often illegal, wood frame buildings.²²³ These illegal rentals were frequently susceptible to catching fire and causing injury or death to tenants at no risk, expense, or care of the homeowner.²²⁴ Middle-class Black homeowners in New Cassel were not shielded from displacement by their homeownership status, either. They frequently fought downzoning proposals that would have rezoned over one-half of their census tract for light industrial use. Black Americans also, through a series of infrastructure decisions that resulted in the expansion of the Northern State Parkway and the Wantagh State Parkway, were further physically excluded from the wider network of social and economic infrastructure available to white Westbury residents.

Not only were Black Americans physically isolated, but they were also socially isolated and excluded from formal representation in local politics. Despite being excluded from representation on the North Hempstead Town Board and the Fire and Water

²²³ Art Perfall, "Grand Jury to Investigate Fatal Cove Tenement Fire," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), May 11, 1955, 7, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/711409089/?terms=%22new%20cassel%22&match=1>.

²²⁴ Perfall, "Grand Jury," 7.

Commission, Black homeowners in New Cassel testified and petitioned at town hall meetings to have their desires for suburban citizenship recognized and realized. However, lack of Black board representation simply barreled into larger asymmetries between the goals of the board and the goals of Black New Cassel residents. When the Westbury School District began tackling integration in 1960, they faced fierce criticisms from Black community leaders over the lack of administrative representation Black residents had at the school and board level and were charged with facilitating the further segregation of schools in the Westbury District.²²⁵ Segregated housing patterns produced segregated school districts, and the exclusion of Black teachers from classrooms, Black history from curricula, and Black parents from PTA and Board Associations all hardened already existing lines of demarcation between the white and Black school districts of Westbury-New Cassel. As carceral solutions for students with designated behavioral problems became increasingly popular in the 1960s, Black families in Nassau County faced a new form of exclusion from quality education and Black school children were “automatically consigned to vocational training rather than regular academic programs” as discipline for infractions or reported behavioral issues, all for which “Negro youths said...they were disciplined more harshly” in comparison to their white peers of the same age.²²⁶ Ultimately, these social and political developments targeted at excluding Black New Cassel residents from traditional institutions and avenues of full citizenship built the concrete podium on which the NCPD could stand in April 1968. This thesis has aimed to

²²⁵ "Seek to Avoid Segregation in Westbury," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), August 18, 1960, 36, accessed December 16, 2021,

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/712225118/?terms=%22new%20cassel%22&match=1>.

²²⁶ Glenn Padnick, "Inwood Negroes Clear the Air," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), July 27, 1967, 74, accessed December 16, 2021, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/713721360/>.

show how policing aids and defends white suburban space in the War against Desegregation and will illustrate in this chapter how different forms of social exclusion and infrastructural violence also bolster the isolating and oppressive control police were able to exercise in predominantly Black suburban enclaves.

New Cassel was originally established in the 1870s as a settlement for German immigrants on Long Island.²²⁷ After the completion of the LIRR, New Cassel was served by a substation, but this service ceased before the beginning of the 1900s.²²⁸ New Cassel experienced subsequent demographic shifts, especially during and after World War II, when the plots neighboring the railroad tracks served as hotbeds of industry in Nassau County. An account provided by Oscar Holmes, president of the Progressive Civic Association of New Cassel, suggests that New Cassel was roughly 25% industrialized in 1957.²²⁹ Westbury, after previously refusing to incorporate the village in 1927, came to see the area as a “plum – a breadbasket” for tax revenue with which they could support their growing white institutions at the expense of and without care for Black residents and workers.²³⁰ Throughout the 20th century, New Cassel was accessible only by adjacent LIRR stations in Westbury and Hicksville to the east and west, respectively. Private buses and shuttle services transported Black domestic and white-collar workers between these stations, their jobs, and their homes. Waves of working and middle-class Black

²²⁷ Town of North Hempstead, "Town Unveils Historical Markers and Gateway Signs in New Cassel," Town of North Hempstead, last modified December 6, 2018, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://northhempsteadny.gov/news/?FeedID=2445>.

²²⁸ Town of North Hempstead, "Town Unveils," Town of North Hempstead.

²²⁹ "700 Hit Downzoning of Half of N. Cassel," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 23, 1957, 25, accessed December 16, 2021,

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/715013295/?terms=%22new%20cassel%22&match=1>

²³⁰ "New Cassel Homeowners Fight Move to Dissolve Water District," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 30, 1954, 16, accessed December 16, 2021,

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/711321302/?terms=%22new%20cassel%22&match=1>.

Americans migrated to the New Cassel area throughout the 1940s and 50s, inheriting an unincorporated village with light, water, and sewage infrastructure independent from the village of Westbury and town of North Hempstead.

Working-class Black families settled in New Cassel in the 1940s and 50s during and after the Second Great Migration. Many were employed as sleep-in domestic servants and in various manual and service labor jobs for white residents across industrial and tourism industries in Nassau County. These men, women, and children were denied access to affordable quality housing in New Cassel and subject to living in illegal attics and basements in dilapidated structures hastily developed by white landlords on their empty lots. They were also forced to rent these inadequate and cramped housing units at exorbitantly high rates ranging from \$175 to over \$400 a month.²³¹ One example from a 1958 *Newsday* article highlights egregious conditions in a 6-bedroom home at 61 Division Street in New Cassel.²³² 20 Black families were packed into single rooms equipped with gas plate cookers and exposed lighting fixture wires and being charged a monthly total of \$510 a month by John A. Jarrett of Medford Station in Suffolk County.²³³ Jarrett was exposed for doing what many lot and homeowners in designated “Negro areas” had been doing for over a decade during waves of Black suburbanization: Instead of selling this home to a Black family and formally acknowledging their move into white suburban space, he converted the 8-room home into a 14-room apartment building using makeshift partitions and curtains and charged families \$90 a month each

²³¹ Art Perfall, "Rents for Shanty Cut from \$175 to \$4 a Month," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 19, 1955, 7, accessed December 16, 2021,

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/711397101/?terms=%22new%20cassel%22&match=1>.

²³² "Order Action on Six-Family 'Slum' House," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), December 3, 1958, 35, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/712290196>.

²³³ "Order Action," 35.

to cram their lives and belongings into the confines of one room.²³⁴ White suburbanites like John A. Jarrett understood that there was a lack in the supply of affordable housing and fervently opposed the development to low-income housing communities in their neighborhoods, but still felt that low-income families seeking affordable housing did not deserve to live in safe conditions within the boundaries of their incorporation villages and townships. In addition, Jarrett and other owners would attempt to further disenfranchise Black tenants by listing the homes that they rented for tax sale in local newspapers, reflecting the fact that they owed these Black neighborhoods school and town tax revenue while extracting profits from their renters.²³⁵

Plots of land above and below Railroad Avenue were developed in the early 1950s specifically for middle-class Black families.²³⁶ The area, like other redlined neighborhoods, experienced white flight and came to be known as the Negro area of Westbury by 1955.²³⁷ Black families felt a sense of pride looking after their identifiably middle-class homes and quiet streets but were still described in reference to their proximity to poverty and slum conditions. A section of the January 1966 “Negroes on Long Island,” *Newsday* special titled “Ghettos, Gilded and Grimy,” includes New Cassel in their description of what they refer to as “little Harlems,” or predominantly minority communities that inhabit Nassau County’s limited supply of affordable housing.²³⁸ The article makes the claim that despite New Cassel being an area with “mostly private homes” built over the last 15 years on “neatly landscaped plots,” the presence of bars

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Thomas A. Johnson and Harvey Aronson, "Ghettos, Gilded and Grimy," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 8, 1966, 14W, accessed December 15, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713315229>.

²³⁷ Johnson and Aronson, "Ghettos, Gilded," 14W.

²³⁸ Ibid.

frequented by domestic workers on Thursday nights in the neighborhood earned the neighborhood the title of “split-level poverty” by *Newsday* writers and Nassau-Suffolk County Human Rights Commission members.²³⁹

Like housing, places that permitted Black socialization were limited in Nassau County, usually restricted to the boundaries of already predominantly Black suburbs of New Cassel, Freeport, and Roosevelt. In these establishments, working-class Black residents could spend their weekly wages betting on races, drinking heavily, and soliciting prostitutes. Black suburbanites of all class strata were restricted to the same social spaces, and in these spaces, they maintained relationships and cultural connection to their friends and relatives in the city and the South. Middle-class Black families often described the experience of spending the evening with white neighbors at a birthday party that “must have cost \$5,000 for 100 people,” and spending the night drinking liquor, dancing to music, and eating soul food with Black friends and family members.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Harvey Aronson and Thomas A. Johnson, “The Negro on Long Island,” *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 8, 1966, 11W, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713315214>.



Black Nassau County residents dancing at Hempstead's Club Peppermint²⁴¹

Despite their attempts to separate themselves geographically, politically, occupationally, and socially from working class Black suburbanites, middle-class Black families still faced several attempts to redevelop their 20-block neighborhood into an industrial district. For Nassau County, the cementing perception of predominantly Black neighborhoods like New Cassel as slums in popular media was crucial in justifying their continuous assault on Black residential zones throughout the 1950s and 1960s. It was also critical for Nassau County to paint New Cassel as a slum if it were to apply for federal aid to finance these redevelopments, despite *Newsday* accounts repeatedly citing the neighborhood as an established and neat middle-class suburban enclave. Despite their efforts to downzone and disenfranchise the Black community of New Cassel, these attempts by the North Hempstead Town Board and the Westbury Fire and Water Commission were repeatedly shut down as the result of organizing efforts led by Black

²⁴¹ Aronson and Johnson, "The Negro," 11W.

residents and white neighbors who empathized with the Progressive Civic Association's homeowner politics and feared that continued industrialization would negatively affect their property values.

In 1957, the North Hempstead town Board proposed the rezoning of an 18-block section of New Cassel from residential to light industrial.²⁴² Oscar W. Holmes and the Progressive Civic Association of New Cassel collected over 700 signatures in protest.²⁴³ Holmes and other residents also delivered testimonies to the Board and Commission, positioning their issue as not a Black one, but from the perspective of concerned homeowners who feared congestion and depreciation of home values.²⁴⁴ The North Hempstead Town Board eventually turned down their own proposal, signifying a victory for Holmes and Black homeowners in New Cassel. Local government suggested large tracts of New Cassel for redevelopment again in both 1958 and 1960, both of which were ultimately denied after petitioning led by the Progressive Civic Association of New Cassel.²⁴⁵ In 1965, however, developers made the argument to downzone 5 acres of New Cassel bound to the North by Union Avenue, between Hicks Street and Grand Boulevard by emphasizing its proximity to the Northern and Wantagh State Parkways and all other expressways and the district's need for tax dollars to support their schools, as well as jobs.²⁴⁶

²⁴² "700 Hit Downzoning of Half of N. Cassel," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 23, 1957, 25, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/715013295/?terms=%22new%20cassel%22&match=1>.

²⁴³ "700 Hit Downzoning," 25.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ "New Cassel Zone Plea KOed," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), June 15, 1960, 30, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/712233788/?terms=%22new%20cassel%22&match=1>.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Proposals and community responses to downzoning attempts also reflect patterns of separate and unequal representation in the neighborhood: majority Black residents and a majority white governing board. These two groups had different sets of interests and constituencies in mind. The lack of representation that Black residents of New Cassel had, or were permitted to have, on the North Hempstead Town Board and the Westbury Fire and Water Commission highlights one of the ways in which suburban institutions aim to isolate and control Black neighborhoods. In 1968, the Board refused to fill a vacancy on the Fire and Water Commission on account of “not having anyone to recommend.”²⁴⁷ However, Black residents had been recommending Westbury resident Thomas Nivens during the Board’s deliberation period. His nomination was ignored, and the post was later filled by an appointee named by incumbent members of the Fire Water Commission.²⁴⁸ Black residents articulated their frustrations about this decision to *Newsday*, citing that the Westbury Fire and Water District was the body, with support from the North Hempstead Town Board, repeatedly slating New Cassel for downzoning in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁴⁹ Evidently, across these two decades, white residents of the surrounding suburbs, Westbury and South Westbury,

Segregating housing patterns inevitably produced segregated school districts, especially under a local school administrative system that bordered on micromanagement in Nassau County. In Lyndon B. Johnson’s emerging Great Society, which infused carceral strategies in the expansion of the national social safety net, carceral approaches to handling students with designated behavioral problems emerged in Nassau and Suffolk

²⁴⁷ "Westbury Post Left Empty Despite Pleas," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), October 23, 1968, 19, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713918457>.

²⁴⁸ "Westbury Post," 19.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

County school districts. The police department established professional relationships with Nassau County educational institutions and were given greater authority to enforce the boundaries of segregation and become active participants in the physical control of Black students both within and outside their school walls.

Before 1966, special and vocational education had been centralized and planned under the Vocational Education and Extension Board (VEEB).²⁵⁰ In March of 1966, Nassau County Legislature began to deliberate on the new shape VEEB would take so that the County could request as much federal aid to support its programs as possible. Two programs emerged as the front runners: Vocational and Special Education (VASE) and Area Centers of Cooperative Educational Services (ACCES). VASE was supported by the Nassau Board of Supervisors.²⁵¹ The six Board representatives were chosen from three designated towns and two designated cities in Nassau, North Hempstead, Hempstead, Oyster Bay, Long Beach, and Glen Cove, to represent county wide interests on issues related to the budget, planning & development, public safety, health, and social services of Nassau County.²⁵² The Board of Supervisors argued that the present board of VEEB directors had done much to centralize and improve special and vocational education programs in Nassau County.²⁵³ They also suggested that it would be difficult to get building approval through public referendum, which is what the approval process would look like under ACCES.²⁵⁴ Finally, they emphasized that VASE would qualify for

²⁵⁰ Martin Buskin, "Taking Notes," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), March 28, 1966, 88, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713326971/?terms=%22BOCES%22&match=1>.

²⁵¹ Buskin, "Taking Notes," 88.

²⁵² John T. McQuiston, "Nassau Board Is Overturned By U.S. Judge," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), April 15, 1993, accessed December 15, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/04/15/nyregion/nassau-board-is-overturned-by-us-judge.html>.

²⁵³ Martin Buskin, "Taking Notes," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), March 28, 1966, 88, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713326971/?terms=%22BOCES%22&match=1>.

²⁵⁴ Buskin, "Taking Notes," 88.

more federal aid than both ACCES and VEEB, with the option for local school districts to convert their VASE board to an ACCES board.²⁵⁵

Schools also participated in the project of community-wide surveillance, the war on crime, and the war on drugs by allowing plainclothes officers to station themselves in schools and implicate high school students in some Long Island communities in the war on drugs. While adults were finding ways to get involved with their local policing efforts, the Nassau County PD also embarked on in-school programming that promoted popular political agendas of the 1960s and 70s, such as the war on drugs and crime and involved police and school children in recreational activities that came to shape how police would be perceived in participating neighborhoods.

ACCES was fiercely supported by coalitions representing local school districts, including the Nassau School Superintendents, State PTA Congress, and the Nassau-Suffolk School Board Association.²⁵⁶ They made the case that ACCES would give more power to individual school districts and allow school district boards more control over their budgets for special and vocational education.²⁵⁷ ACCES would function like Suffolk County's BOCES program, which began in 1948.²⁵⁸ Under ACCES, if two or more districts identified a need for additional services outside the scope of public schools, they could establish a cooperative contract with ACCES and provide services that would be separately financed from the rest of the school district. Local actors, including parents, teachers, and administrative staff supported ACCESS because it was grounded in the

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ "School Chiefs Back ACCES, Knock VASE," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), March 17, 1966, 84, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713322010/?terms=%22BOCES%22&match=1>.

²⁵⁷ "School Chiefs," 84.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

suburban right which allowed them to exercise greater local control over their institutions, and these institutions could more easily exclude Black students, teachers, and parents from their boundaries on a local level.

On January 1, 1968, newly appointed VEEB Director Dr. Eugene Burnkrant announced that Nassau County will adopt a cooperative model between VASE and ACCES, assigning them different but supplemental functions.²⁵⁹ The Nassau County ACCES program evolved into Nassau BOCES, which received federal aid as a part of Johnson's War on Poverty and Crime and its aim at addressing juvenile crime and access to quality education for people with marginalized identities. However, Nassau BOCES was derived from and incorporated into a society that aimed to penalize and control the movement of Black citizens. It became part of a larger suburban arsenal in the War against Desegregation and added to the institutional actors which surveilled, penalized, and excluded Black residents of all ages from the boundaries of safe, white, suburban space.

In April 1968 after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., New Cassel was again singled out and cited in *Newsday* for being a hot spot for disorderly activity.²⁶⁰ In the years and decade leading up to this moment, Nassau County and local Westbury officials, residents, and private business owners all collaborated and leveraged the strong social network they had created to sustain the War on Desegregation to almost permanently suspend the movement and freedoms New Cassel residents had in their

²⁵⁹ Martin Buskin, "Rival Agencies Join in School Plan," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), January 24, 1968, 9, accessed December 16, 2021,

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/713711897/?terms=%22BOCES%22&match=1>.

²⁶⁰ "28 Held in Nassau Incidents," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 10, 1968, 65, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713725753>.

community. The concentration of Black residents and external white control of the community's institutions created the perfect environment for which the Police Department could infiltrate, attack the predominantly Black enclave for disturbing the public order and isolate the incidents from spilling over into the defined white suburban space that encircled New Cassel.

While the full details of Looney's plan are not and may never be publicized, the fact that a plan of this nature was devised and could be put into place in April 1968 goes to show that all of the directives and functions of all of the departments that grew out of the NCPD during the 1960s intended to cement and protect the previously legally segregationist infrastructure of the suburbs.²⁶¹ These social boundaries of isolation again became very tangible during the Civil Rights Era, where these boundaries and infrastructure were weaponized against Black neighborhoods after the local and County citizens had exhausted all other exclusion methods available to them.

Nassau County drug raids continued into the early 1970s as federal and state initiatives led under the War on Drugs expanded and were usually concentrated in communities targeting people categorized as small-scale distributors. High school students protested the presence of police in their schools, including students at Valley Stream Central High school following a 1970 raid that resulted in the arrest of 39 suspects, 9 of which were students at the school.²⁶² While school officials and the Department maintain that officers were only stationed at the request of the school, students articulated a widely held belief that undercover agents visited the campus more

²⁶¹ Paul Leventhal, "For 1st Time, Cops Use Plan Against Disorder," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 10, 1968, 65, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/713725753>.

²⁶² Bob Imbriano, "39 Arrested in LI Narcotics Raid," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), April 24, 1970, 27, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714194293>.

often than they were letting on, and that this raid and previous others were staged.²⁶³

Akin to other school initiatives under the War on Drugs, the NCPD also partnered with schools to raise awareness about narcotics abuse and drug crimes. Schools began to implement drug education and awareness programs for adults and school children, as well as install drug education coordinator positions within their occupational structures. The Valley Stream School Board voted to create this position across all four junior high and high schools in the district following the raid.²⁶⁴ Other districts, such as Lynbrook, had already created similar positions.²⁶⁵

By 1972, the Nassau County BOCES program was the largest and most expensive operation in the state.²⁶⁶ Costs to taxpayers and the cost to parents to enroll their children in BOCES programs both exceeded that of Suffolk County's BOCES program by \$1,000.²⁶⁷ 60% of this cost was recuperated through state aid, but Nassau County taxpayers threatened tax revolt because they felt their cost-per-pupil was far higher than necessary.²⁶⁸ Investigators also told *Newsday* in a 1972 article that Nassau County BOCES schools has gained a reputation for being a "dumping ground for troublesome students" rather than its stated function: to provide vocational and special education services to taxpayers whose children needed them.²⁶⁹ Private care agencies alleged that

²⁶³ Imbriano, "39 Arrested," 27.

²⁶⁴ Michael Alexander, "Teachers Slated for Drug Tasks in Valley Stream," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), May 11, 1970, 11, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714213972>.

²⁶⁵ Alexander, "Teachers Slated," 11.

²⁶⁶ Martin Buskin, "Growing Pains of a Special School System," *Newsday* (Hempstead, NY), August 17, 1972, 124, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/714718608>.

²⁶⁷ Buskin, "Growing Pains," 124.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

an unknown number of children were being placed in programs that failed to address the disabilities and behavioral issues children admitted .²⁷⁰

Ultimately, the expansion of BOCES, the centralization of its campuses in the predominantly Black enclaves of New Cassel and Hempstead, and continued police presence in schools in both enforcement and teaching roles functioned to permanently cement patterns of school segregation in New Cassel. Black students were treated differently by white peers and administrators, and they were ultimately denied formal access to quality education. They were subjected to the very phenomenon that white parents wanted to avoid for their children – the creation of a super-district that oversaw, controlled, and limited the education that Black children county-wide had access too.²⁷¹ It also integrated large amounts of Black schoolchildren into a schooling institution funded by federal aid aimed at expanding the scope and functions of the carceral state.

The Nassau County Board of Supervisors was declared an unconstitutional organization in 1993 in a United States Federal District Court for failing to adequately represent all residents of the county in accordance with its “one man, one vote” policy.²⁷² The Nassau County Board of Supervisors allotted votes to respective townships and villages using a weighted system, meaning that small and unincorporated villages like New Cassel were functionally excluded from the decision-making process at the County level. As a result, the Board of Supervisors was also charged with failing to represent minority voices and interests when making legislative decisions.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² John T. McQuiston, "Nassau Board Is Overturned By U.S. Judge," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), April 15, 1993, accessed December 15, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/04/15/nyregion/nassau-board-is-overturned-by-us-judge.html>.

Conclusion

For Nassau County's institutions, the late 1970s, 80s and 90s were defined by Federal courts challenging Nassau County specific institutions, indicating that the blanket Federal provisions of prior decades did not do enough to address the proliferation and defense of white supremacy at the local level. After the United States Supreme Court ordered the Nassau County Police Department to seriously address and ameliorate the racial and gender bias that plagues their recruitment and hiring processes, it became clear that the community-police relations programs they established using federal funding made available through the LEAA of 1965 and the Omnibus Crime Bill of 1968 functioned solely to expand surveillance and control of Black communities instead of pursuing programs that would incorporate Black officers into the legitimate ranks of the Department and collaborate with Black residents, who lived and were perceived as outside the bounds of white suburban space. After the announcement that the Nassau County Board of Supervisors had to dissolve, where New York's Eastern District Court's prosecutors found irrefutable proof that the Nassau County Police Department and the Nassau County Board of Supervisors had grown to oppress and disenfranchise Black suburbanites and withhold authority of decision making to a group of select few white and overwhelmingly Republican, members of the Board refused to comment individually to *Newsday*, citing the decision as "no surprise."²⁷³ This callous reaction to a monumental decision indicates that in Nassau County suburbs, the function and most important goal of institutions for almost a century was to systematically exclude and

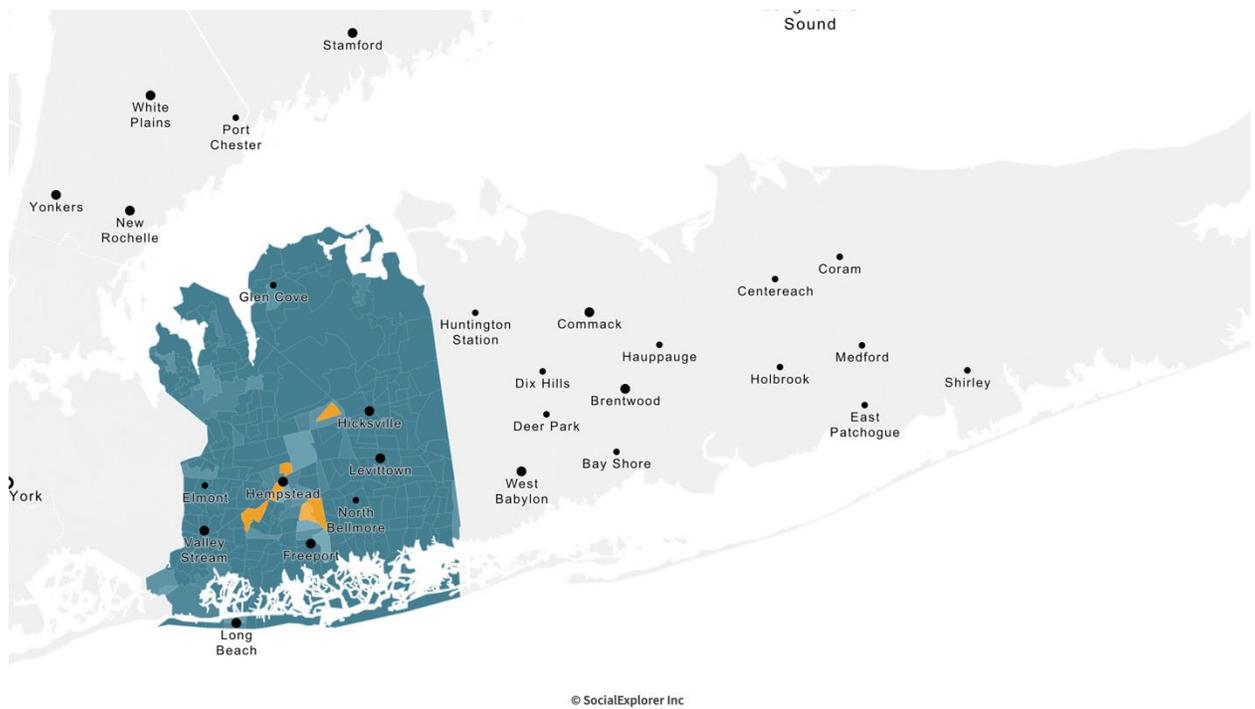
²⁷³ McQuiston, John T. "Nassau Board Is Overturned By U.S. Judge." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), April 15, 1993. Accessed December 15, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/04/15/nyregion/nassau-board-is-overturned-by-us-judge.html>.

make decisions that would further isolate and restrict growing populations of Black suburbanites.

At every stage of the Department's expansion, Black Nassau County residents organized to resist the encroachment of surveillance and isolation that the Department facilitated deeper inside of their borders. In the face of wider white disdain, Black working, and middle-class residents fought to be included in the suburban projects of good streets, good schools, and good housing that were developed for and promised to overwhelmingly white Americans across the country. These Black suburbanites organized both formally and informally to assert their right to full citizenship and provide those benefits and services such as parent-teacher associations, summer reading programs, civic associations alongside institutional organizations that sponsored the advancement of Civil Rights in the 1960s, such as the NAACP and CORE. No matter how Black Americans framed their demands – from radical to conservative – the fundamental assertion of a Black right to white suburban space represented an existential through to white suburban space and the amenities white suburbanites enjoyed, for they were gained on the very basis of Black exclusion.

Therefore, as illuminated by federal decision and the stories from the Civil Rights Era itself in Nassau, there is great irony in the so called 'peaceful police state' that the NCPD, white suburbanites, and politicians stress is so necessary to the survival of the suburbs. For Black residents, a police state is anything but peaceful – full of restriction, intimidation, and brutality. However, the Nassau County Police Department became so socially, politically, and financially enmeshed within the County's neighborhoods, and came to serve as the foremost representative of dominant society in Nassau County

suburbs. If cops in Black neighborhoods were perceived as oppressive and hostile, and the police believed they came to represent the needs and desires of dominant society, then perhaps dominant society in the suburbs – or at least in Nassau County, which by 1970 remained roughly 95% white – wished to oppress, brutalize, and outcast Black suburbanites in pursuit of defending segregation and white supremacy in suburban space.²⁷⁴



Nassau County Map of Racial Demographics, 1970²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Summer Thomas, Nassau County Racial Demographics, 1970, map, Social Explorer, accessed December 16, 2021, <https://www.socialexplorer.com/3d320463d6/explore>.

²⁷⁵ Thomas, Nassau County Racial Demographics, 1970, map.

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