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African American Outdoor Recreation

A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study

Front cover caption: *Y.W.C.A. camp for girls, Highland Beach, Maryland, 1930.* The youth were attending Camp Clarissa Scott, a YMCA camp named for Harlem Renaissance writer and poet Clarissa Scott Delany. Photographed by Addison Scurlock. Courtesy of the Scurlock Studio Records, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

African American Outdoor Recreation Theme Study

Historic Context and National Historic Landmark Survey

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Part A: Historic Context Study

Introduction

On a brutally hot Chicago day in July 1919, seventeen-year-old Eugene Williams and a group of friends ventured from their homes in the city's Black Belt to the shores of Lake Michigan. Though closer to their neighborhood, Williams and his friends knew to avoid the public beaches at the terminus of 29th, 38th, and 51st streets, as well as the lakefront Jackson Park, one of the crown jewels of the city's park system. These were for white leisure and recreation only. Instead, they headed to the 26th Street beach, one of the few sections of the shoreline that Chicago's 100,000 Black residents were permitted to use.[1]

As Williams and his friends floated on a railroad tie in the waters offshore, a group of white men stationed at the neighboring 29th Street beach began pelting the teenagers with stones. The kids, it seemed, had inadvertently floated across an imaginary color line in the water. One of those stones struck Williams in the head, knocking him off their makeshift raft and into the lake, where he drowned. Rather than arrest the assailant, the white police officer who arrived on the scene instead threatened to arrest Williams's grief-stricken friends. As the crowd swelled and anger mounted, a Black man fired a gun at the officers, who summarily returned fire, killing the gunman. Within hours, white and black Chicagoans were engaged in armed conflict across the city's South Side that would last for nearly two weeks.

Williams's death sparked one of the deadliest and most destructive race riots in U.S. history. By the time Illinois Governor Frank Lowden summoned the state's National Guard to quell the violence, 38 people (23 Black, 15 white) were dead, over 500 injured (two-thirds Black), and over 1,000 people (nearly all African American) had been left homeless.[2] Williams's death forever altered many Black Chicagoans' relationship with the city's lakefront. Growing up on the South Side in the aftermath of the Red Summer of 1919, Dempsey Travis remembers, "I was never permitted to learn to swim. For six years, we lived within two blocks of the lake, but that did not change [my parents'] attitude. To Dad and Mama, the blue lake always had a tinge of red from the blood of that young black boy."[3]

As a young child, Williams's family had escaped from debt peonage and racial terrorism in rural Georgia for the chance for freedom in the North. And yet, as his death reminds us, racial segregation was a national, not a regional, phenomenon during the Jim Crow era (ca. 1890–1965), no more so than when it came to places of recreation. From New England to the Deep South, and from the Midwest to the Pacific coast, African Americans encountered a diverse array

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[1] This study treats "Black" as a proper noun reflecting its use as a form of self-identification by people of African descent, equivalent to the names of other ethnic and national groups. As such, it is capitalized. In contrast, "white" is a term used to denote social privilege and structural advantage more so than a shared history and self-identity among people classified as "white," and is not capitalized in this study.

[2] St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harper & Row, 1945), 65–77; William M. Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1970); Colin Fisher, "African Americans, Outdoor Recreation, and the 1919 Chicago Race Riot," in *"To Love the Wind and the Rain": African Americans and Environmental History,* eds. Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 63–76. See also "Chicago 1919: Confronting the Race Riots," accessed March 20, 2021, https://www.chicago1919.org/.

[3] Dempsey J. Travis, *An Autobiography of Black Chicago* (Chicago: Bolden, [1981] 2013), 38.

of policies and practices that worked to exclude them from white-controlled or -claimed outdoor recreational spaces.[4] The deadly consequences of challenging white supremacy, as Dempsey Travis learned, profoundly shaped how Black people experienced nature. African Americans' collective memories and lived experiences of racial discrimination informed their decisions on where, how, and among whom to pursue recreation. Williams and his friends' search for a place to swim, cool off, and relax that summer afternoon, and the outrage his death sparked, also point to an important (and under-appreciated) dimension of the Black freedom struggle—for the right to leisure and recreation.

This context study examines the history and meaning of recreation in Black America in the period from emancipation to the early twenty-first century. Recreation as a historical subject encompasses a wide range of activities and experiences, from organized sports, vigorous physical activities, and forms of exercise to strictly social gatherings and passive forms of entertainment. Recreational activities take place in public and private spaces, in commercial and non-commercial settings. They may be engaged in spontaneously or informally, or they may be organized and conducted for profit. Some recreational activities and gatherings are exclusive to certain age groups (children, adolescents, adults, or senior citizens), while others encompass all age groups. Others have been segregated along gender lines. How, when, and among whom people engage in recreation, and what constitutes recreational activities, has changed over time and in relation to broader changes in culture and society. This study examines that history through the lens of race and from the perspective of Black people, and in so doing brings the histories of recreation and civil rights in the United States, subjects covered in previous National

[4] Northern states during the antebellum era adopted the first segregation statutes restricting African Americans' access to public spaces and accommodations. See Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 97; C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 18–21. Southern states began enacting racial segregation statutes in the late 1880s, which the US Supreme Court upheld as Constitutional in its 1892 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. By the 1890s, most white-owned resorts and outdoor commercial amusements in the U.S. barred African Americans or forced them to accept inferior accommodations. See David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 2. One notable exception were public swimming pools in the North, which, prior to the 1920s, were strictly segregated by gender, but not race. Beginning in the 1920s, however, public swimming pools in the North underwent a simultaneous process of gender and class integration and Black exclusion. Prior to the 1920s, few cities in the South or West operated municipal pools; nationwide, almost no towns with a population of less than 30,000 operated a public pool. Between 1920 and 1940, nearly 2,000 municipal pools were built across the U.S., all of which practiced some form of racial segregation or exclusion. Some southern cities built swimming pools for Black residents during these years. During the 1920s, Fort Worth, Texas; Dallas, Texas; Atlanta, Georgia; and New Orleans, Louisiana, all opened separate swimming pools for African Americans. Without exception, these pools were smaller in size and inferior in quality to public swimming pools for whites. See Jeff Wiltse, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 3, 95, 91. African Americans also experienced forms of discrimination, exclusion, and second-class treatment in state and municipal parks and campgrounds. Before the 1940s, however, no states had laws mandating racial segregation in state parks. White park officials simply practiced forms of intimidation to keep Blacks out. Only after African Americans began filing lawsuits challenging pervasive, if unwritten, discriminatory practices did southern states begin passing laws mandating segregation in state parks. See William E. O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 29.

Park Service studies, together.[5] Rather than attempt to catalog the entire range of recreational activities and experiences Black people pursued, this study focuses on those recreational activities, and moments in the history of recreation, that speak to and shed further light on central themes and broader currents in the Black experience in the United States during this period. It does so primarily through the lens of the places and types of spaces Black people created for themselves, as well as those they fought for access to. It also contextualizes and offers historical insight into many African Americans' vexed and ambivalent relationship with the types of outdoor spaces and recreational activities that are frequented by and popular among white Americans today.

Just as Dempsey Travis's parents forever associated the shores of Lake Michigan with Eugene Williams's violent death, the remote, forested areas that white conservationists celebrated and the national parks movement sought to preserve were, for many African Americans, associated with racial terror and subjection. It was in these rural settings where white mobs lynched Black people, where untold numbers of African Americans were tortured and murdered at the "hands of persons unknown," and where Black life seemed most vulnerable. As a Black child growing up in Jim Crow Mississippi, Gilbert R. Mason (who would later lead a daring campaign to desegregate the beaches along the Mississippi Gulf Coast) recalled being reprimanded by a white employer for not acting deferential to a white female customer: "'Gilbert, be careful,' she warned. Then, pointing down the road toward the Pearl River, she added these ominous words: 'They took one colored boy down there, and they never heard from him again.'… Even at age thirteen, I knew that the Pearl River had become the premature grave of many blacks."[6] Mob killings of Black persons and terrorizing of Black communities became, for many white Americans, a form of recreation and amusement, conducted in the open, in outdoor spaces. Clearings in forests, bridges, and public parks served as sites for spectacle lynchings, where white mothers and fathers gathered, picnic baskets in hand and children in tow, to watch the burning of flesh and to hear the tortured screams of a Black victim, and later circulate pictures and postcards to commemorate the event.[7]

The seeming ability of white people to attack and murder Black people with impunity throughout the period under study not only inflicted a form of collective trauma on Black America; it also profoundly informed how African Americans perceived their environment and navigated outdoor space. "[L]ynching," Carolyn Finney argues, "succeeded in limiting the environmental imagination of black people whose legitimate fear of the woods served as a painful reminder that there are many places a black person should not go." Growing up, the African American writer Jewelle Gomez recalled, "the great outdoors [had never] seem[ed] a hospitable place for Blacks

[5] National Park Service, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation in Public Accommodations* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2004), https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/upload/Civil-Rights-Public-Accomodations-2018-final.pdf; James H. Charleton, *Recreation in the United States: National Historic Landmark Theme Study* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1986).
[6] Gilbert R. Mason and James Patterson Smith, *Beaches, Blood, and Ballots: A Black Doctor's Civil Rights Struggle* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 3.
[7] Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 199–240.

or women. It was a place in which, at best, we were meant to feel uncomfortable, and at worst—hunted."[8]

More than made to feel unwelcome and unsafe, across the United States throughout much of the period under study, Black people were formally excluded from accessing and enjoying beaches, parks, campgrounds, playgrounds, and other recreational spaces designated for whites only. This included national parks. Throughout its first half-century of existence, National Park Service administrators adhered to Jim Crow policies and practices in national parks.[9]

Figure 1: *Outside Looking In*, *Mobile, Alabama*, 1956. A group of Black youth staring through a fence at a whites-only playground. Photographed by Gordon Parks. Courtesy of and copyright The Gordon Parks Foundation.

[8] Carolyn Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 60; Jewelle Gomez, "A Swimming Lesson," in *Forty-Three Septembers: Essays* (Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1993), 27. See also Cassandra Y. Johnson, "A Consideration of Collective Memory in African American Attachment to Wildland Recreation Places," *Human Ecology Review* 5, no. 1 (1998): 5–15.

[9] Beginning with the creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, the US Department of the Interior and, later, the National Park Service contracted with private businesses to provide lodging, food, and other accommodations to visitors of national parks. Throughout the Jim Crow era (ca. 1890–1965), these proprietors routinely segregated or denied service to African American visitors. Park rangers, likewise, adopted various methods for discouraging African Americans from entering national parks. See Susan Shumaker, "Untold Stories from America's National Parks: Segregation in the National Parks," 2009, accessed December 8, 2020, http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/media/pdfs/tnp-abi-untold-stories-pt-01-segregation.pdf [https://perma.cc/5BH6-M458]; Terrance Young, "'A Contradiction in Democratic Government': W. J. Trent, Jr., and the Struggle to Desegregate National Park Campgrounds," *Environmental History* 14, no. 4 (2009): 651–682.

The segregation of parks, beaches, campgrounds, and other outdoor recreational spaces sought to affirm America's racial hierarchy and enforce Black subordination. Throughout the Jim Crow era, white Americans remained quite comfortable with sharing recreational spaces with Black people so long as African Americans occupied a subservient role. The middle-class whites who flocked to seaside destinations like Atlantic City, New Jersey, and Virginia Beach, Virginia, in the mid-twentieth century, clamored for the chance to be pushed along the boardwalk in a rolling chair by a Black man, entertained in night clubs by Black performers, and served drinks by the pool by a Black waiter.[10] But they recoiled at the prospect of Black people entering these spaces on their own terms, as equals, and often invoked racist stereotypes of Black people as hyper-sexualized, criminally prone, and carriers of communicable diseases to justify their exclusion from recreational spaces such as swimming pools and beaches.

Underlying whites' fears of bodily contact with Black persons was a deeper desire to maintain Blacks' subordinate role in society. Reflecting on the white resorts along the Mississippi Gulf Coast where she worked, Lodie Marie Robinson-Cyrille noted, "[Black people] could go and work in the hotels as cooks, as domestics, as maids, but they could not lounge or enjoy some of the same activities as, say, a tourist would enjoy. And if you think about it, it's contrary to the whole idea of a plantation mentality, because slaves, they don't have leisure activities. They have work."[11] Indeed, white efforts to segregate and exclude Black people from white recreational spaces betrayed an unease with the very notion of Black people enjoying themselves, by themselves, on their own terms. As Mamie Garvin Fields put it, "Really, certain whites didn't like to think you had leisure to do anything but pick cotton and work in the field…. Just generally, if you were black, you were not supposed to have either time or money, and if you did, you ought not to show it."[12] Surveying the landscape of public recreation in Black communities in the 1940s and early 1950s, the recreational planner James Madison remarked, "The attitude in general [among whites] was that the Negro did not have *bona fide* leisure time, outside of that which should be spent in church. In many states, gymnasiums were deliberately left out of schools constructed for Negroes because gymnasiums were associated with play and recreation."[13]

When cities and states did begrudgingly agree to provide outdoor places for Black people to recreate, it was invariably in remote, out-of-the-way, often dangerous and polluted areas, and of distinctly inferior quality, places that would never offend white sensibilities, or threaten white

[10] Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Jonathan Mark Souther, "Twixt Ocean and Pines: The Seaside Resort at Virginia Beach, 1880–1930" (Master's thesis, University of Richmond, 1996).
[11] Lodie Marie Robinson-Cyrille, interview by Worth Long, August 24, 1999, transcript, Mississippi Oral History Project, Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, University of Southern Mississippi.
[12] Mamie Garvin Fields and Karen Fields, *Lemon Swamp and Other Places: A Carolina Memoir* (New York: Free Press, 1983), 72.
[13] James A. Madison, "Public Recreation," in *The Integration of the Negro into American Society: papers contributed to the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the Division of the Social Sciences, May 3 and 4, 1951* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1951).

property. The places that white America deemed suitable for Black recreation reflected their ideas about Black inferiority, but also their underlying fears of Black equality.[14]

Figure 2: *Y.W.C.A. camp for girls, Highland Beach, Maryland*, 1930. The youth were attending Camp Clarissa Scott, a Y.M.C.A. camp named for Harlem Renaissance writer and poet Clarissa Scott Delany. Photographed by Addison Scurlock. Courtesy of the Scurlock Studio Records, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

In the face of innumerable challenges and obstacles, African Americans built or laid claim to hundreds of parks, beaches, campgrounds, resorts, playgrounds, and other outdoor recreational spaces, and created numerous programs and initiatives aimed at facilitating recreational opportunities for Black families and children, from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. The types of recreational spaces and programs created by and for Black people were as diverse as Black America itself. Each constituted an implicit demonstration of Black equality and rebuke of the racist fictions that whites told themselves about Black people. At a more basic level, each provided African Americans something they so desperately needed: pleasure and relief. The recreational spaces Black people created ranged from sections of city parks and urban waterfronts to rural youth camps to exclusive resorts and summer vacation towns. Some began as business enterprises or real estate developments, others as religious or social reform initiatives, still others were the result of Black protest and demands that local governments provide Black people with safe, decent, and accessible places of their own. The quantity, types, and locations of Black recreational spaces founded in this era offers a veritable index of Black culture, society, politics, and activism from the late-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century, and of the

[14] Andrew W. Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours: How Black Beaches Became White Wealth in the Coastal South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

diverse ways Black people experienced nature, pursued pleasure, formed community, and fought for justice and equality. The physical conditions and current status of historically Black recreational spaces, likewise, tell of the history of Black struggle for freedom in outdoor space. Throughout the study, we will include descriptions of the past and present physical conditions of sites mentioned in the text and footnotes. Readers should also refer to the Appendix, which provides definitions and descriptions of the physical characteristics of the different site types discussed in the study.

Figure 3: *Woman by sign blown down during hurricane—Virginia Beach, Florida*, 1950. Pressure and protests by Miami's Black citizens for a beach exclusive to African Americans saw white city officials oblige to their demands in establishing the Virginia Key Beach State Park in 1945. Courtesy of the State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

Regardless of their origin, function, physical conditions, or duration, all of these places played a critical role in Black people's struggle to survive and thrive under American apartheid. Within these spaces, generations of Black Americans found release from the weight of oppression. They engaged with nature, pursued hobbies, spent time with family and friends, and enjoyed what Drake Cayton and St. Clair Drake described as "rest from white folks[.]"[15] "[F]or members of a class whose long workdays were spent in backbreaking, low-paid wage work in settings pervaded by racism," the historian Robin D. G. Kelley observed, "the places where they played were more than relatively free spaces in which to articulate grievances and dreams. They were places that enabled African Americans to take back their bodies, to recuperate, to be together."[16]

[15] Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis,* 387.
[16] Robin D. G. Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History* 80, no. 1 (1993): 84.

These were places where, as South Carolinian Anderson McPherson put it, "we could not see them, but more important they could not see us."[17]

By the mid-twentieth century, tens of thousands of African Americans flocked to Black-owned and operated vacation resorts, outdoor concert venues, and amusement parks each summer, while millions of others took part in Black community events, celebrations, and informal gatherings in urban parks and rural outdoor settings throughout the year. The places where Black people came together for leisure and recreation became critical sites in the production and dissemination of Black popular culture. It was here where some of the most popular and influential musicians of the twentieth century honed their craft before Black audiences, and where some of the most influential Black thinkers and leaders of this era retreated to restore and replenish their minds, bodies, and souls. Out of these spaces where Black people congregated in the shadows of Jim Crow emerged forms of music, entertainment, thought, and expression that would come to profoundly influence and enrich American culture and society as a whole.

Figure 4: Four women posing in front of the car of radio disk jockey Hoppy Adams at Carr's Beach near Annapolis, Maryland, ca. 1956. Unknown Photographer. Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives.

The growth and geographical distribution of Black recreational space reflected major developments and themes in African American history during this period. These included: Black

[17] Herb Frazier, "N. Charleston Man Recalls Segregated Edisto Beach," *Charleston Post and Courier*, August 12, 2001.

out-migration from the rural South to cities and towns in the Northeast, Midwest, and West coast;[18] class differentiation and the growth of a Black elite and middle class;[19] the growth, vibrancy, and precarity of Black business and entrepreneurship and involvement of white businesses and white investors in Black consumer markets;[20] movements for social reform, public health, childhood development, and interracialism;[21] Black-led campaigns to force local governments to provide equal services and public amenities to Black communities and address dire social and public health needs;[22] and the significance of Black social spaces and counterpublics in shaping and sustaining Black civic engagement and social activism.[23]

The challenges African Americans faced in pursuit of leisure and securing recreational space spoke to broader and enduring threats to Black persons, Black property, and Black historic preservation. As detailed in the chapters that follow, African American recreational spaces were—and remain—uniquely vulnerable to dispossession, physical destruction, and loss. Many of the Black recreational spaces founded in the century following emancipation experienced attacks at the hands of white arsonists who saw such outward displays of Black freedom and social mobility as a threat; were subject to racially motivated exercises in state power (including, the use of eminent domain, tax foreclosure, and other legal tools used to take and repurpose Black property); suffered the adverse effects of human-caused environmental change and degradation; or fell into the hands of land speculators and developers and succumbed to the destructive forces of real estate capitalism. Some Black recreational spaces experienced all of

[18] Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Brian McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope: Nature and the Great Migration in Chicago* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

[19] Mark S. Foster, "In the Face of 'Jim Crow': Prosperous Blacks and Vacations, Travel, and Outdoor Leisure, 1890–1945," *Journal of Negro History* 84, no. 2 (1999): 130–49; Willard B. Gatewood Jr, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Lawrence Otis Graham, *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class* (New York: HarperPerennial, 2000); Andrew W. Kahrl, "The Political Work of Leisure: Class, Recreation, and African American Commemoration at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, 1881–1931," *Journal of Social History Societies & Cultures* 42, no. 1 (2008): 57–77; Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[20] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*.

[21] Matthew Klingle, "Fair Play: Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Inequality in Twentieth-Century Seattle," in *The Nature of Cities*, ed. Andrew C. Isenberg (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 122–58; Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Amanda Martin-Hardin, "Nature in Black and White: Summer Camps and Racialized Landscapes in the Photography of Gordon Parks," *Environmental History* 23, no. 3 (2018): 594–605; Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Jennifer L. Ritterhouse, *Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Southern Children Learned Race* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2006).

[22] Gregory W. Bush, *White Sand Black Beach: Civil Rights, Public Space, and Miami's Virginia Key* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016); N. D. B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

[23] The term "counterpublic" refers to spaces where oppressed groups assemble away from the surveillance of the dominant social group and forge a collective sense of themselves and their struggle. Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem'," 75–112; Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 49–90.

these threats over the course of their history, while others face these threats at the present moment or in the near future. Collectively, their histories underscore the inherent insecurity of Black property and urgency of Black historic preservation.

Even as they worked to develop and defend places of their own, Black people fought relentlessly against their exclusion from public outdoor spaces and accommodations. Rather than existing apart from and in secondary importance to the more-celebrated and chronicled struggles for political, economic, and legal equality, leisure and recreation constituted, as the legal scholar Regina Austin put it, "a site of struggle against structures of white … supremacy [and] … an arena in which the fight for social equality [was] waged."[24] By the 1950s, civil rights organizations identified segregated parks and other outdoor recreational spaces as Jim Crow's "Achilles heel," one whose legal challenge could serve as the vehicle for toppling all forms of segregation.[25] By the 1960s, equal access to public recreation became a key target of civil rights protests and litigation.[26]

African Americans' efforts to desegregate outdoor recreational spaces also led to some of the civil rights era's ugliest acts of racist violence.[27] States and cities employed every tool imaginable to prevent recreational integration and preserve racial privilege in outdoor spaces. Many of them scrambled to sell swimming pools, parks, and public resorts to private, racially discriminatory groups or, when that failed, simply divested from public recreation entirely and filled swimming pools with concrete.[28] In the decades following the civil rights movement, white Americans tended to avoid public recreational facilities that were popular among African Americans. As they did, public support for public recreation plummeted, and funding for programs slashed.[29] Under-investment in public recreation today is a direct result of white resistance to desegregation in the past and underscores the cost of racism to us all.[30]

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[24] Regina Austin, "'*Not* Just for the Fun of It!': Governmental Restraints on Black Leisure, Social Inequality, and the Privatization of Public Space," *Southern California Law Review* 71 (1998): 670.
[25] O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*, 123.
[26] Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle Over Segregated Recreation in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).
[27] See, for example, Mason, *Beaches, Blood, and Ballots.*
[28] Across the South, scores of cities and towns closed public swimming pools rather than comply with desegregation mandates. Nationwide, public funding for public recreation plummeted in the decades following the civil rights movement, as white Americans abandoned public facilities in favor of private clubs and demanded reductions in taxpayer funding of public recreation. In its *Palmer v. Thompson* (1971) decision, the US Supreme Court held that municipalities could close rather than desegregate public facilities. See *Palmer v. Thompson,* 403 U.S. 217 (1971). See also Heather McGhee, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* (New York: One World, 2021), 17–40.
[29] Andrew W. Kahrl, *Free the Beaches: The Story of Ned Coll and the Battle for America's Most Exclusive Shoreline* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); Robin D. G. Kelley, "Playing for Keeps: Pleasure and Profit on the Postindustrial Playground," in *The House That Race Built: Black Americans, U.S. Terrain,* ed. Wahneema Lubiano (New York: Pantheon, 1997), 195–231; Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 105–30; Wiltse, *Contested Waters,* 181–206.
[30] McGhee, *The Sum of Us.*

But while white Americans retreated into private recreational spaces and abandoned the promise of public recreation to bridge social divisions and ameliorate inequities in the decades following the civil rights movement, Black Americans and other communities of color reclaimed and reimagined public spaces and, through recreational activities, worked to build a diverse and inclusive society. They did so in the face of ongoing discrimination, mistreatment, harassment, and violence. Black-organized events and outdoor gatherings remained subject to intensive surveillance, suppression, and racial profiling from public officials and law enforcement, while African Americans engaged in leisure and recreational activities in public spaces suffered racist abuse and, in some cases, violent and deadly assault from white groups and individuals. Cell phones with video recording capabilities have allowed victims to capture and broadcast to the wider public these experiences. Recorded incidents involving white citizens assaulting a Black child for swimming in a pool,[31] or calling the police on a Black family barbecuing in a public park[32] or a Black man birdwatching in Central Park,[33] or the deadly assault on a Black man jogging through a white neighborhood,[34] shocked and outraged many white Americans and have helped force a reckoning on racism in twenty-first century America.

The dangers Black people continue to face when traveling, engaging in recreation, or accessing public space has led many to look to the past for guidance and find lessons in the strategies previous generations of African Americans employed to remain safe, maintain their dignity, and find pleasure in a hostile world. It also lends further urgency to preserving the recreational spaces Black people built for themselves in the past and teaching the history and meaning of Black struggles for recreation to future generations.

Study Overview

Chapter One begins with an overview of how Black people experienced nature and pursued leisure and recreation under slavery. It then traces the rise of a Black laboring class in white leisure spaces, as well as the emergence of a Black elite and their travel and leisure pursuits in the late 1800s. It looks at how ideas about race informed white perceptions of the natural environment during the formative stages of the conservation movement and creation of national parks.

Chapter Two covers the period from the early 20th century, when the vast majority of African Americans resided in the South, to the late 1930s and the conclusion of the first wave of the Great Migration. It looks at leisure and recreation in the rural South and discusses the growth of segregation laws and policies in public outdoor space in the early 20th century. It then traces Black people's journeys to northern cities and the West coast and their reactions to and pursuit of

[31] Jeff Wiltse, "'Get out, Little Punks': Recent Racist Incidents at Swimming Pools Have a Long History," *Vox*, July 11, 2018, https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2018/7/11/17556342/adam-bloom-pool-patrol-paula-video-racist.
[32] Laura M. Holson, "Hundreds in Oakland Turn Out to BBQ While Black," *New York Times*, May 21, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/21/us/oakland-bbq-while-black.html.
[33] "White Woman Calls 911 On Black Man Birdwatching In Central Park Who Said Her Dog Should Be Leashed," *Gothamist*, May 26, 2020, https://gothamist.com/news/white-woman-calls-911-black-man-birdwatching-central-park-who-said-her-dog-should-be-leashed.
[34] "Ahmaud Arbery: Anger Mounts over Killing of Black Jogger Caught on Video," *The Guardian*, May 6, 2020, sec. US news, http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/may/06/ahmaud-arbery-shooting-georgia.

outdoor recreation in these new environments. The chapter also shows how urban Black populations claimed outdoor space, pursued pleasure and amusement, and established organizations and programs dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Black people, especially children, through recreation. Finally, it charts the forms of discrimination and exclusion African Americans encountered in the North and looks at how contests over access to recreational space shaped race relations in Great Migration-era cities.

Chapter Three follows the rise of separate Black outdoor recreational spaces in Jim Crow America. It shows how African Americans sought to secure and defend their own spaces, and how Black-owned and/or operated beaches, amusement parks, campgrounds, resorts, and retreats both reflected and gave expression to the class, cultural, and geographical diversification of Black America in the first half of the twentieth century. It examines the politics and economics of Black recreational resort development as well as the cultural significance of these spaces in Black life. The types of outdoor spaces Black people secured for themselves shaped ideas about nature and African Americans' relationship with the natural world. The growth of Black leisure spaces also fueled, and was fueled by, the growth of Black pleasure travel and vacationing in the mid-twentieth century. As Black Americans hit the roads, they encountered new forms of discrimination and new dangers, which in turn, gave rise to a network of Black travel accommodations and guidebooks aimed at helping Black travelers navigate through a racist society in safety and dignity.

As Black communities, property owners, and entrepreneurs built a separate, parallel Black recreational landscape, Black individuals, groups, and organizations fought to dismantle the racial barriers preventing their equal access and enjoyment of public outdoor spaces and accommodations. Chapter Four recounts that struggle through a close examination of key legal cases that challenged segregation statutes and ordinances in places of outdoor recreation, as well as campaigns and direct actions to desegregate public places of outdoor recreation. It also looks at how white officials at the federal, state, and local level responded to Black demands and later, how public officials and white Americans reacted to desegregation of beaches, parks, swimming pools, and other recreational spaces and facilities.

As civil rights activists fought to dismantle Jim Crow, new barriers, restrictions, and inequities were taking shape in the cities and suburbs of post-World War America that would negatively impact how urban Black populations experienced nature and pursued recreation and profoundly inform Black critiques of racial liberalism and mainstream civil rights organizational strategies and fuel the rise of the Black Power movement. This is the subject of Chapter Five. In the postwar era, federal, state, and local governments devoted unprecedented amounts of public funding for outdoor recreation and conservation. But these measures were overwhelmingly directed toward rural and suburban areas, at the expense of the urban areas where the majority of Black Americans now lived. Such inequities fueled Black unrest during the "long hot summers" of the 1960s, when hundreds of cities experienced uprisings over a litany of injustices, among them, the lack of decent and safe places of outdoor recreation. In response, lawmakers and activists fought to secure greater funding and prioritization of the recreational needs of urban Black populations and address the recreational deprivations and public health needs of urban Black communities, all the while neglecting to address the structural forces perpetuating racial inequality. The inadequacies of racial liberalism to address the underlying causes of poverty and

suffering in urban Black America in the 1960s (which included the recreational deprivations resulting from suburban exclusion, government austerity, and institutional neglect) gave rise to Black Power movements. Groups like the Black Panther Party leveled radical critiques of civil rights liberalism, called attention to the dire environmental and public health conditions Black communities were forced to endure, and adopted programs that sought to address the health and well-being of Black families and children, including their recreational needs. In so doing, Black Power movements offered a more expansive vision of Black liberation that placed the human right to leisure and recreation alongside demands for civil rights. Movements for Black Power, as this chapter shows, were forced to contend with the power of white reaction and America's right-ward turn in the 1970s, which resulted in massive cuts to public funding for recreation and a broader retreat among many white Americans into private recreational spaces, trends that would have severe and lasting repercussions for recreational access and opportunities for Black Americans.

Chapter Six surveys the history of African American recreation from the 1980s into the twenty-first century and examines the changing landscape of race and recreation in post-civil rights America. It looks at how the rise of private recreational facilities and decrease in public funding for parks and recreation impacted Black Americans, how the modern environmental and conservation movements struggled to incorporate Black people and Black perspectives into their organizations and agendas, and how public administrators, academics, and recreational industries have interpreted and attempted to address the persistence of Black under-utilization of national parks and under-participation in certain outdoor activities. It highlights the divergent fates of Black recreational spaces founded during segregation in the decades after desegregation and examines the factors contributing to the demise and disappearance of many of these sites, as well as the measures taken by Black communities to preserve, protect, and maintain their vitality. It also calls attention to ongoing efforts to expand Black access to and sense of safety and belonging in the great outdoors.

Chapter One

Freedom Denied: Land, Nature, and Pleasure after Slavery (1865–1900)

Under slavery, the woodlands, swamps, and waterways of the South had been a contested space in whites' struggle for mastery and Black people's quest for freedom. Enslaved persons seeking to escape to freedom or find momentary rest from bondage learned to navigate these environments and shared knowledge of the landscapes of the South with each other. Conversely, white slaveholders worked to keep Black people confined and surveilled and tracked their movements across space. They employed non-slaveholding white men as slavecatchers and structured the region's nascent law enforcement apparatus around the protection of their human property. These experiences continued to shape how Black people saw and navigated through outdoor environments, and how white southerners fought to re-establish forms of servitude, after slavery's demise.

Following emancipation, many African Americans navigated the waterways, charred forests, and former battlefields of the South in search of loved ones. Others sought to claim a piece of land for themselves and secure a measure of distance and autonomy from whites. However, as white resentment over Black Americans' striving for economic inclusion and political representation grew in the late 1800s, the outdoor environments of the rural South increasingly became spaces of terror, where white mobs lynched Black people and where the threats to Black life were most acute.[1] Because of this, African Americans' relationship with the natural world was decidedly less romantic than those of white Americans who idealized the pastoral landscapes of the American South or the pristine wilderness of the American West. Yet Black Americans also understood that mastery over the environment, often in the form of land ownership, meant both autonomy and membership among the body politic. Nature, too, could offer Black Americans subversive and edifying, if brief, escapes from capricious and exploitative agricultural and domestic labor, two of the main forms of work available to freedpeople in the post-emancipation South. In the decades following emancipation, African Americans sought out rural outdoor spaces to hunt, fish, court and date, play, and gather together for picnics, camp meetings, religious ceremonies, and other rituals, social events, and ceremonies.[2]

African Americans' efforts to secure moments of rest and spaces of pleasure and congregation during these decades challenged the social and economic foundations of white supremacy in ways that historians have only recently begun to appreciate. Every time Black families and friends gathered along a riverbank to enjoy nature and the company of each other, every time an excursion party of Black churches or fraternal orders boarded a train bound for a mountainside resort or floated down a waterway in merriment, every instance of African Americans' claiming

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[1] Kimberly K. Smith, *African American Environmental Thought: Foundations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 102; Cassandra Y. Johnson and J.M. Bowker, "African-American Wildland Memories," *Environmental Ethics* 26, no. 1 (2004): 60–61.

[2] Forrester B. Washington, "Recreational Facilities for the Negro," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 140 (1928): 272–273; Valerie Grim, "African American Rural Culture, 1900–1950," in *African American Life in the Rural South, 1900-1950*, ed. R. Douglas Hurt (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 113–114; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 1898), 35.

an outdoor space and enjoying themselves among themselves, constituted an implicit rebuke of white notions of a racially hierarchical society, one in which Blacks' labor generated the material resources that allowed whites to enjoy leisure. Indeed, the more Americans of all races and ethnicities pursued outdoor recreation outside of the workplace, and the more work and leisure came to occupy distinct and separate realms of human experience, the more African Americans' leisure activities became subject to ridicule, derision, and measures to restrict and suppress. More than a respite from the strictures of Jim Crow, leisure and recreation became, for the generations of Black Americans born after slavery, an assertion of equality and Black leisure spaces an arena of struggle.

This chapter uncovers the roots of Black Americans' complicated relationship with the natural world. It shows how freedpeople pursued freedom through recreational and social activities, and how the nature of Black recreation and the places where it was pursued changed in the decades following emancipation. It also traces the origins of the conservation movement and its ideological construction of a white wilderness, dispossession of Native lands, and subsequent exclusion of Black people from the nation's national parks at their founding in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Recreation and Power under Slavery

"Dem days was hell," confessed Delia Garlic as she reflected upon her experience as an enslaved woman. "Babies was snatched from dere" mother's breasts, "sold to speculators," and children were "separated from sisters an' brothers and never saw each other ag'in" she confided. Enslavers owned "you soul an' body" and "sold [African men, women, and children] lak cattle." Delia conceded she could talk "'bout it all day, but even den" her interviewer "couldn't guess de awfulness of it."[3] The former slave and leading abolitionist Frederick Douglass similarly captured the dehumanizing character of enslavement, which flattened Black bodies into part of the pastoral landscape. After succumbing to the punishments of a particularly brutal enslaver, Douglass lamented that "the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute!"[4] Yet even under that long, haggard gloom of oppression, enslaved women and men like Garlic and Douglass found glimmers of hope in nature—from the wild places to garden plots—as a tool in the struggle for mastery.

The plantation landscape and the surrounding community were often quite diverse environments. When selling his twelve-hundred-acre plantation in Wilkinson County, Mississippi in 1830, James Girault emphasized its six hundred acres of pasture, four hundred acres of woods, several springs, and "'mile front on a beautiful clear creek with fine fish.'"[5] Historian Anthony E. Kaye in his study of Mississippi's Natchez District notes that "[w]oodlands might separate quarters and yard, intersperse the crop fields, or join neatly at the boundary between plantations."[6] Often,

[3] "Dem Days Was Hell," *Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Aarons-Young. to 1937,* 1936. Manuscript/Mixed Material, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 129.
[4] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publishing Group, 1976), 45.
[5] Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 37.
[6] Kaye, *Joining Places,* 34.

these woodlands, plus the swamps, and unimproved acreage that frequently surrounded crop fields "changed from year to year."[7]

Enslaved people experienced these natural spaces through a variety of interpretive lenses which included surviving African folk traditions, Christianity, personal experience, and even the word of enslavers. Some enslaved men and women held that the plantations and surrounding landscapes represented geographies of containment and others expressed fear of creatures or spirits in the wild places.[8] Yet many enslaved people transformed their natural surroundings into an alternative Black landscape—a rival geography—to defy the physical and psychological burden of bondage.

Enslaved men and women absconded to the woods to self-liberate. Cornelia Carney, born into slavery in the late 1830s, recalled that her father escaped to the woods and visited his family on Saturday nights and Sundays. But he was not the only "one hidin' in de woods. Dere was his cousin, Gabriel, data was hidin' an' a man name Charlie."[9] Enslaved men and women also turned to the wilderness to rest and recuperate. "Sometimes slaves jes' run' 'way to de woods fo' a week or two to get a res' fum de fiel,' an' den dey come on back," recollected Lorenzo L. Ivy.[10] The woods also held medicinal value for enslaved men and women. "Us didn't have no bought medicine in dem days," noted Oliver Bell to his interviewer, "Jes' whut us got outta de woods lak slippery ellum fer fever an' poke salad root; dey he'p a lot."[11] The same secluded spaces strengthened the enslaved spiritually. Enslaved people erected worship spaces, "brush arbors," or "hush harbors" in the woods, "secluded in the natural camouflage afforded by a stand of trees, hollows, gullies, swamps, the banks of a creek or river." "On Sundays," remembered Emily Dixson, "us would git together in de woods." There they "could sing all de way through an' hum 'long an' shout, yo' all know, jist turn loose lak."[12]

Much closer to home, enslaved people worked garden plots in which they tended vegetables to augment their diets.[13] Enslaved men also often retreated to the natural spaces beyond the quarters to fish, hunt fowl, rabbits, opossums, racoons, and other wild game to feed their families. Esther Green noted that "de men would go huntin' at night and come back wid lots of big fat 'possums and rabbits by de dozen, and mos' of de time, dey would even catch a coon." One enslaved man, "who had turkey traps, was always bringin' in lots of dem big fat birds." Though fishing and game hunting supplemented the often paltry diets of the enslaved, enslaved men transformed

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[7] Kaye, *Joining Places,* 131.
[8] Smith, *African American Environmental Thought*, 23–38; Elizabeth D. Blum, "Power, Danger, and Control: Slave Women's Perceptions of Wilderness in the Nineteenth Century," *Women's Studies* 31, no. 2 (2002): 251–253; Marissa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 11.
[9] Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 67.
[10] Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 40.
[11] "De Bes' Friend a Nigger Ever Had," *Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Aarons-Young. to 1937,* 1936, Manuscript/Mixed Material, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 28.
[12] Kaye, *Joining Places,* 40.
[13] J. T. Roane, "Plotting the Black Commons," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 20, no. 3 (2018), 247.

such pursuits into subversive forms of leisure.[14] Willis Woodson maintained, "All de fun we has am huntin' and fishin."[15] In fact, the enslaved frequently turned to the outdoors and unimproved acreage around the quarters for recreation and leisure.

Enslaved men and women were often compelled to labor hard all day, six days a week. "We wukked all day, ever'day cep'n some Sat'days," Mary Ella Grandberry said describing her experience in slavery in Alabama.[16] Enslaved men and women used the Saturdays or Sundays they were granted off to perform domestic chores, visit others, hunt, fish, garden, and attend church. They also used the little time they had to pursue leisure, often in the form of secret frolics, in the natural shelter of the woods. In Virginia, Nancy Williams frequently "slip[ped] away" from the farm where she lived to an "ole cabin" in the woods where she and other enslaved people danced, performed music, drank alcohol, and courted.[17] At such affairs the enslaved often dressed boldly, sang daringly, danced respectably, and drank handsomely. Austin Steward, formerly enslaved, wrote that "However ill fed they might have been, here, for once, there was plenty. Suffering and toil was forgotten, and they all seemed with one accord to give themselves up to the intoxication of pleasurable amusement."[18]

Enslaved persons' ability to pursue recreation varied by plantation and labor regimes. On some plantations, there were, according to one contemporary account, "no games or recreations … provided, nor was there indeed any time to enjoy them if they were." Most enslavers, however, "found it to their advantage to grant a few periods of leisure time to their slaves," according to the historian D. Wiggins. This was strategic, aimed ultimately at maximizing the labor output and profitability of their human property and minimizing the threat of insurrection.[19] As historian Stephanie Camp has shown, frolics organized by enslavers on Saturday nights or holidays "were intended to seem benevolent and inspire respect, gratitude, deference, and importantly obedience."[20] Enslavers often organized and contributed to open-air frolics. One enslaved man remembered that he and others were given "all de whiskey dey wanted to drink."[21] Another enslaved man, Jim Gilliard, remembered that his enslaver's "brother would fiddle" for them "on Sattidy night."[22] It was the practice of one enslaver to provide "a dance house for the young, and those who wish to dance."[23] Most importantly, enslavers saw in recreation and leisure an opportunity to tighten the bonds of servitude. Frederick Douglass characterized holiday

[14] Roane, "Plotting the Black Commons," 243.
[15] Sergio A. Lussana, *My Brother Slaves: Friendship, Masculinity, and Resistance in the Antebellum South* (University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 74.
[16] "Today's Folks Don't Know Nothin,'" *Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Aarons-Young. to 1937, 1936,* Manuscript/Mixed Material, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 162.
[17] Camp, *Closer to Freedom,* 60.
[18] Camp, *Closer to Freedom,* 71.
[19] D. Wiggins, "Good Times On the Old Plantation: Popular Recreations Of The Black Slave In Antebellum South, 1810–1860," *Journal of Sport History* 4, no. 3 (1977): 261–262.
[20] Camp, *Closer to Freedom,* 65.
[21] "Frank Gill, A Slave Boy Escapes Whipping By Pulling Tail of Frock Coat," *Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Aarons-Young. to 1937, 1936*, Manuscript/Mixed Material, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 148.
[22] "Sold at Three Months for $350," *Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Volume 1, Alabama, Aaron-Young*, 155.
[23] Camp, *Closer to Freedom,* 65.

celebrations and other sanctioned amusements "the most effective means in the hands of the slaveholder in keeping down the spirit of insurrection."[24] Yet enslavers desired that Black pleasure fall within reasonable parameters. Therefore, it was not uncommon for whites to attend parties and other festivities to surveil and control activities. Though he readily supplied the people he claimed as property with entertainment, treats and other goods for frolics, John Nevitt sat "up until 2 oclock in the morning to keep order with them."[25]

Acquiring Land, Pursuing Freedom, Finding Pleasure after Emancipation

Following the American Civil War, newly emancipated people sought to relate to nature and the environment on their own terms. Despite the forced intimacy the enslaved endured with southern landscapes as a result of chattel slavery, many formerly enslaved men and women imagined land ownership as an integral tool to freedom and economic independence. "Gib us our own land and we take care ourselves," an African American man from Charleston remarked, "but widout land, de ole masses can hire us or starve us, as dey please."[26] By 1870, some 30,000 African Americans had managed to acquire land, most often small plots.[27] These Black landowners often preferred subsistence farming, concentrating on food crops first, then cotton or other staples for cash.[28] The vast majority of Black southerners, more than four million, however, did not own land. Instead, many found themselves performing agricultural labor under various arrangements including renting farmland or sharecropping—a system in which the landowner supplied the acreage, home, necessary equipment and supplies, food, and cash in return for a share of the crop and the cost of the goods and materials provided. Sharecropping appeared immediately after the Civil War and spread across the South over the next several years. Initially, Black southerners believed sharecropping offered escape from the gang labor that mimicked slavery and oppressive white supervision.[29] However, rarely did agricultural labor under any arrangement produce the prosperity and self-sufficiency that Black southerners imagined. "We thought we was goin' to get rich like the white folks," Felix Haywood, who had been enslaved in Texas told an interviewer. "We thought we was goin' to be richer than the white folks, 'cause we was stronger and knowed how to work, and the whites didn't and they didn't have us to work for them anymore. But it didn't turn out that way. We soon found out that freedom could make folks proud but it didn't make 'em rich."[30]

Black southerners sought relief from the demands of agricultural production in a number of ways. Many pursued education in any of the schools founded by missionaries, established by Reconstruction governments, or erected by Black educators. Some abandoned farming all together, eager to make a living in the South's larger towns and cities. Many transformed monotonous and demanding agricultural tasks and domestic chores into participatory, often subversive recreational opportunities not unlike they had under slavery. Writing from the

[24] Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,* 50.
[25] Camp, *Closer to Freedom,* 65.
[26] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 104.
[27] Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 81.
[28] Foner, *Reconstruction,* 108.
[29] Foner, *Reconstruction,* 108; Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 128.
[30] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind,* 121–122.

vantage point of the late 1920s, Carter G. Woodson, recorded that post emancipation rural African Americans "formerly enjoyed the husking bee, the barn-raising, the quilting party, the harvest festival [...] hunting, [and] fishing."[31]

African Americans also sought leisure outside their rural environs through excursions. Excursion trains, often no more than an open-air platform car, ferried African Americans from plantations to nearby towns and cities for recreation and visits with friends and family on weekends when agricultural workers enjoyed time off and train traffic was light. In the Mississippi Delta, one of the most popular routes was a round trip from Vicksburg to Jackson, the state capital.[32] While in town, rural African Americans could enjoy "negro barrooms," "negro billiard parlors," "colored fairgrounds," the "colored skating rink," or the local racetracks from "Negro grandstands."[33] It was also not unusual for African Americans to enjoy a picnic at a local park. Indeed, a "picnic in the nearby woods," farm, or local park proved a popular activity for both rural and urban African Americans in the South.[34]

Out of the clandestine world the enslaved constructed among the natural spaces of the plantation landscape emerged the collective values and institutions that sustained Black southerners following the Civil War.[35] Across the South, churches sponsored excursions, picnics, and other leisure activities as did the fraternal orders, benevolent and mutual aid societies, and a range of other institutions. In May of 1873, the "colored Sunday School Union" in Georgetown, South Carolina held a "large picnic" at a local farm.[36] Similarly, Black families in Jackson, Mississippi picnicked at Hamilton Park in May 1879 following "a parade of their fire company."[37] Often, such outings were associated with political events or holidays such as the Fourth of July and Emancipation Day. An African American local chapter of the Knights of Labor and local churches in Warrior, Alabama sponsored a picnic on the Fourth of July in 1887.[38] Attendees at such picnics, who sometimes gathered by the hundreds or thousands, could enjoy barbecue and any number of foods, refreshments, speeches, "brass bands, [base] ball games, or dancing."[39] A Black baseball team from Warrior trampled the opposing "Stone street nines" twenty-seven to eight following a "luxurious dinner," a number of speeches, and a reading of the Declaration of Independence.[40]

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[31] Carter G. Woodson, *The Rural Negro* (Washington, DC: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1930), 137–138.
[32] John M. Giggie, *After Redemption: Jim Crow and The Transformation of African American Religion in the Delta, 1875-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 36–37.
[33] Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 185.
[34] Woodson, *The Rural Negro,* 138.
[35] Foner, *Forever Free,* 82.
[36] Satakia, "Our Charleston Letter," *Georgetown Planet*, May 31, 1873.
[37] Vernon Lane Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), 232.
[38] "K of L Celebrate the Fourth. Will Build a Hall.," *Huntsville Gazette*, July 9, 1887.
[39] Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi,* 269.
[40] "K of L Celebrate the Fourth."

New Mechanisms of Racial Control after Slavery

Despite the great enthusiasm Black southerners expressed at picnics and other recreational activities, their leisure pursuits, indeed most aspects of their lives, were governed by the pervasive logics of white supremacy. Following slavery, white southerners hastened to reimpose Black subordination in social and economic life. In the rural South, this included legislation and labor practices designed to limit Black mobility and ensure an ample, stable agricultural laboring class. Immediately following emancipation, nearly all southern states enacted a number of "Black Codes," or legislation designed to restore a modicum of the old plantation system. Black farm workers without labor contracts could be jailed as vagrants and fined. If they were unable to pay, they then could be auctioned off to an employer who would pay their fines then compel the laborer to work for them as reimbursement. Some states limited Black property ownership, established child apprenticeship programs, and penalized white employers for offering competitive wages that could entice Black farmers to leave their current employers.[41] Congress weakened the restrictive legislation with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the 14th Amendment.[42]

In the wake of emancipation, white southerners exploited Blacks' poverty and need for credit to entrap freedpeople in endless cycles of debt so as to keep them tied to the land.[43] Under new sharecropping arrangements, white landowners rented parcels of farmland and extended credit for seed and supplies to Black farmers on highly usurious terms. While whites sold sharecropping as a way for Black people to climb out of poverty through hard work, in practice, these arrangements served to tighten the bonds of servitude. "After de last bale was sold … him come home wid de same sick smile and de same sad tale: 'Well, Mandy, as usual, I settied up and it was "Naught is naught and figger is a figger, all for de white man and none for de nigger'" recalled Mandy Walker.[44] In fact, many found themselves mired deeper in debt. "'Father came home with sad, far-away eyes, having been told that we were deeper in debt than on the day of our arrival," remembered William Pickens on the day in 1888 his father settled with the landlord, "And who could deny it? The white man did all the reckoning. The Negro did all the work."[45]

In addition to repressive labor practices, white southerners excluded, or segregated African Americans, from nearly all public places. Prior to emancipation, Black southerners were most often denied access to parks, restaurants, and hotels unless they were enslaved and attending to a person who held them as property. In many places, following the conclusion of the Civil War these same patterns continued for a few years before giving way to a patchwork of informal segregation. By 1871, African Americans in Mobile, Alabama who had previously been excluded from streetcars, were permitted as long as they minded "an iron lattice" that had been installed to separate them from whites.[46]

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[41] Foner, *Forever Free*, 95–96; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 368–369.
[42] Foner, *Reconstruction,* 471.
[43] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind,* 116.
[44] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind,* 131.
[45] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind,* 133–134.
[46] Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South,* 184.

First introduced by Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts in 1870, the Civil Rights Act of 1875 outlawed racial discrimination at "inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and other places of public amusement."[47] African Americans welcomed the legislation. Following its passage, members of the African American community in Louisville, Kentucky gathered at a local church and celebrated the cause in "a very undignified, noisy, demonstrative, yet good-natured meeting." Black residents in Thomasville, Georgia organized a "civil rights celebration."[48] Shortly after President Ulysses S. Grant signed the bill into law, two African American men entered Willard's Hotel in Washington, DC, and ordered drinks at the bar.[49]

Such celebrations of Black equality in public life proved premature. White resistance to the Civil Rights Act was immediate and unrelenting. Southern cities such as Atlanta, Georgia, ignored the law and dared Black citizens to sue for their rights.[50] Seeking to placate their white patrons, rail lines in Savannah, Atlanta, and Nashville opted to maintain separate facilities for Black and white passengers.[51] Haphazardly and weakly enforced from the outset, the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1883, one of a series of decisions by the nation's highest court that vacated Black citizens' civil rights and equal protections under the law and facilitated white southerners' dismantling of Reconstruction and its promise of equal citizenship for all.[52]

African Americans experienced the nation's retreat from Reconstruction and descent into Jim Crow in public spaces and accommodations. As the courts turned a blind eye to white terrorism and discrimination, white owners and proprietors of leisure and recreational spaces began imposing segregation and exclusionary policies. In the 1870s and early 1880s, Blacks in Atlanta could flock to Ponce de Leon Springs, a popular leisure spot with bubbling springs, fragrant azaleas, a man-made lake, picnic grounds, a theater and other entertainment. But by the late 1880s, this and many other outdoor recreational options had established whites-only policies.[53]

Whites' drawing of the "color line" in places of outdoor recreation was one among many measures aimed at subjugating Black people and re-establishing a racial hierarchy in the post-Reconstruction South. Such measures extended far beyond mere separatism to include policing and violently suppressing any signs or expressions of Black equality in public life. An epidemic of racial terrorism spread across the South in the late 1800s, with woodlands and other remote areas often the sites for ritualistic murders of Black individuals by white mobs and terrorist groups.[54] Immediately following emancipation, white planters whipped, shot, and killed thousands of Black southerners who eschewed racial deference or challenged labor arrangements. During Reconstruction, the Ku Klux Klan, other paramilitary terrorist groups, and

[47] Alan Friedlander and Richard Allan Gerber, *Welcoming Ruin: The Civil Rights Act of 1875* (Brill, 2018), 640.
[48] Friedlander and Gerber, *Welcoming Ruin*, 581.
[49] Friedlander and Gerber, *Welcoming Ruin,* 590.
[50] Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South,* 189.
[51] Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South,* 186.
[52] Foner, *Reconstruction.*
[53] "Vale of Amusements: Modernity, Technology, and Atlanta's Ponce de Leon Park, 1870–1920," *Southern Spaces* (blog), accessed October 29, 2020, https://southernspaces.org/2008/vale-amusements-modernity-technology-and-atlantas-ponce-de-leon-park-1870-1920/; Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South,* 190.
[54] Robyn Merideth Preston-McGee, "Bitter-Sweet Home: The Pastoral Ideal in African-American Literature, from Douglass to Wright," (PhD diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, 2011), ii.

white southerners unleashed a "storm of beating, lynching and murder" to stamp out support for the Republican Party.[55] Around the presidential election of 1868, the Klan in St. Landry Parish, Louisiana for several days pursued African Americans "through fields and swamps." A number of bodies were found "half-buried in the woods," and two hundred people were estimated killed or injured.[56] By the late 1800s, as sharecropping assumed greater prominence, the Democratic Party gained control of state and local governments, and segregation came to be commonplace, white southerners exercised lynching to maintain control of Black agricultural labor.[57] Dozens of African American farmers in LeFlore County, Mississippi lost their lives in the woods and swamps of the Mississippi Delta at the hands of a white posse in 1889.[58] The violence and racial terrorism African Americans experienced in the South's wooded and remote areas would further degrade their relationships with nature and taint the southern landscape with foreboding. The complicated ideal of nature in the Black imaginary perhaps may be best represented in fiction. In "Between The World and Me," a 1935 poem by Richard Wright, the protagonist, ostensibly enjoying a pleasurable walk "one morning while in the woods," happens upon a "grassy clearing guarded by scaly oaks and elms," which holds the "sooty" remains—"white bones," "a vacant shoe," "the lingering smell of gasoline"—of a lynching.[59]

Black Recreation in the Shadows

The difficult path to economic independence in southern agriculture and the violence in the South's rural countryside following emancipation encouraged many African Americans to leave for larger towns and cities in the region. Others moved even further, to the North, beginning a slow trickle of out-migration that would eventually crest as a wave in the 1910s. But long before the Great Migration, a steady trickle of African Americans migrated north to work in the seaside and mountainous resorts and springs enjoyed by America's burgeoning white elite.[60] As early as the 1850s, African American service workers and entertainers had become a staple of fashionable northern resorts. The Cataract House in Niagara Falls, New York, for example, employed more than two dozen African American men and women, some of whom had escaped slavery, in the 1850s.[61] These patterns persisted after emancipation. In Saratoga Springs, New York, African Americans predominated the hotel industry and more than ninety percent of

[55] W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 6; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* (New York: Simon and Schuster, [1932] 1998), 667.
[56] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America,* 681.
[57] Brundage, *Lynching in the New South,* 13–14, 159.
[58] Edward L. Ayers, *Southern Crossing: A History of the American South, 1877-1906* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 125; William F. Holmes, "The Leflore County Massacre and the Demise of the Colored Farmers' Alliance," *Phylon* 34, no. 3 (1973): 272–273.
[59] Richard Wright, *Richard Wright Reader* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997), 246; Preston-McGee, "Bitter-Sweet Home," 101–104.
[60] Myra Beth Young Armstead, "The History of Blacks in Resort Towns: Newport, Rhode Island, and Saratoga Springs, New York, 1870–1930" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1987), 121.
[61] "Site of the Cataract House," *Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center* (blog), accessed April 4, 2021, https://www.niagarafallsundergroundrailroad.org/underground_railroad_site/site-of-the-cataract-house/. The Cataract House succumbed to a fire in 1945 and is no longer extant. Its former site falls within the boundaries of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

employees in Atlantic City, a resort town on the New Jersey shore, were African American.[62] By the late 1800s, many of these workers had migrated from the upper South.[63] White resort towns harbored a small Black business and professional class in addition to a number of Black employees who enjoyed a variety of year-long service positions and entertainment gigs.[64] However, many Black employees in white resort communities were only seasonal workers, frequently young, single, African American college students.[65] Seasonal workers often encountered difficult work schedules, degrading work conditions, and were often ill-housed and more vulnerable to the local economy and weather than other employees. As one historian records, for many Black seasonal laborers, work in white leisure communities meant "three months to hurry," and "nine months to worry."[66]

In Saratoga Springs, Black men labored as horse trainers, jockeys, and stable boys at the local racetrack. They also worked as ushers, porters, hallmen, bellmen, kitchen help, and waiters in the area's hotels.[67] At Saratoga's Congress Hall in the 1880s, upwards of 150 African American waiters were commanded by a Black maître-d'.[68] Racist attitudes frequently frustrated African American leisure workers' attempts at advancement. One black hotel worker in town remarked in 1882, "You can find here employed, young men of all qualifications, [who would] credit any position, but who are barred because they belong to the proscribed race. All avenues of skilled employment are closed against our young men."[69] Opportunities for African American women were similarly limited. Most Black women in Newport, Rhode Island, a cottage community and summer haven for the wealthy, worked chiefly as domestic servants and laundresses.[70]

African Americans also swelled the ranks of employees at other outdoor attractions. Since 1838, at Mammoth Cave, enslaved African American men, including members of the Bransford family, had led white visitors, like Ralph Waldo Emerson, through parts of the expansive cave system in south central Kentucky. Following emancipation, the formerly enslaved Bransford men and new generations of Bransfords continued to lead tours through the subterranean passageways. A cave guide and Bransford family member opened a boarding house in the early 1900s, Bransford Summer Resort (Resort, rural), to cater to African American tourists to the

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[62] David E. Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction: Race, Leisure, and the Politics of Segregation at the New Jersey Shore, 1865–1920" (PhD diss., West Virginia University, 2013), 38; Armstead, "The History of Blacks in Resort Towns," 125.

[63] Armstead, "The History of Blacks in Resort Towns," 235–236; Richlyn Faye Goddard, "'Three Months to Hurry and Nine Months to Worry': Resort Life for African Americans in Atlantic City, New Jersey (1850–1940)" (PhD diss., Howard University, 2001), 63. For an example of the Black professional and business class in white resort towns see Armstead, "The History of Blacks in Resort Towns," and Goddard, "'Three Months to Hurry and Nine Months to Worry'"

[64] Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction," 38.

[65] Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction," 37–38; Armstead, "The History of Blacks in Resort Towns," 125–126.

[66] Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction," 38; Goddard, "'Three Months to Hurry and Nine Months to Worry.'"

[67] Armstead, "The History of Blacks in Resort Towns," 123–125.

[68] Myra Beth Young Armstead, *Lord, Please Don't Take Me in August: African Americans in Newport and Saratoga Springs, 1870-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 97. Saratoga Race Course is extant and remains operational. Congress Hotel, Grand Union Hotel, and United States Hotel, among the largest hotels in Saratoga and the country, are no longer extant.

[69] Armstead, "The History of Blacks in Resort Towns," 132.

[70] Armstead, "The History of Blacks in Resort Towns," 162.

area. The family's long history with the caves was severed in the 1930s when the family was forced to sell the hotel to facilitate the development of Mammoth Cave National Park and several Bransfords lost their employment in the caves due to the park service's discriminatory hiring practices.[71]

Indeed, African American employees lacked any job security and maintained a precarious toehold at early resorts and outdoor spaces. In 1902, Black waiters and other employees at health resorts in French Lick and West Baden, Indiana, were reportedly "terror-stricken" after local whites "threatened [them] with death" or violence if they did not give up their employment and leave the hotels.[72] A few years later, after proprietors replaced white waitresses with Black waiters at a hotel in West Baden, gunfire erupted near an African American hotel and a dynamite explosion forced African Americans to flee the building.[73] Yet in some places, African Americans were the preferred staff of choice. Beginning in the late 1800s, in Hot Springs, Arkansas, African Americans tended to white patrons as bathhouse attendants at any number of the bathhouses in town fed by the area's thermal springs. Attendants performed a variety of tasks from cleaning facilities, and laundering robes and other items, to providing massages, and administering treatments.[74]

African Americans' relegation to servile roles in white leisure spaces appealed to guests' desires to be treated with deference and live out fantasies of racial mastery.[75] Describing Black waiters at Saratoga Springs, the *New York Times* observed that "Negroes" were "the favorite servants" in part because they were "coaxing, smiling, deferential and eager and they cultivate a degree and kind of servility that is artistic and admirable if [...] not noble." Responding to a reporter astonished by Black waiters' deferential behavior, an African American head waiter responded, "'No, Sir' don't sound very well to a man that's come to get whatever he wants, and has the money to pay for it. Whatever a gues' wants, the waiter must say, 'Yes, Sir.'"[76]

The African Americans who regaled guests at elite white leisure spaces with song and dance and who were among "the best colored waiters" one reporter "had ever seen," also attempted to enjoy the fruits of their labors by taking to the beaches, pavilions, and other public spaces in white resort communities in their downtime, often during the evenings, and at night.[77] They were not alone. At the same moment, the nation's white leisure spaces witnessed a growing contingent of educated, culturally refined, elite African American pleasure seekers. A variety of leisure spaces proved popular among privileged African Americans. Throughout the late 1800s, leading African American politicians and orators of the day, including Blanche K. Bruce, retreated to

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[71] Kristin Ohlson, "The Bransfords of Mammoth Cave," *American Legacy* 17 (2006): 17–24.
[72] "Bitter Race War Threatened: Negro Waiters at Indiana Health Resorts Warned to Leave the Neighborhood," *New York Times,* June 17, 1902.
[73] "Attempt to Blow Up Negro Hotel," *Richmond Palladium*, June 5, 1908.
[74] "African Americans and the Hot Springs Baths" (National Park Service), accessed April 5, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/african-americans-and-the-hot-springs-baths.htm; Tom Hill, "The African-American Experience in Hot Springs National Park" (Brown Bag Lunch Lecture, Old State House Museum, September 19, 2019), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTOUtymzdB8; Portions of Hot Spring, Arkansas, including Bathhouse Row, are included within Hot Springs National Park.
[75] Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction," 40–41.
[76] Julian Ralph, "Many New Yorkers At Saratoga Springs," *New York Times*, August 1, 1902.
[77] Ralph, "Many New Yorkers At Saratoga Springs"; Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction," 21–22.

Hot Springs, Arkansas (Resort, spa), to convalesce and enjoy the region's warm spring waters.[78] So too did African Americans retreat to White Sulphur Springs (Resort, spa) in West Virginia to enjoy its "grand mountain scenery" and "medicinal properties."[79] Elite African Americans also flocked to seaside resorts. Writing in 1904, Mary Church Terrell, an affluent educator and founding member of the National Association of Colored Women and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People living in Washington, DC observed, that "at Cape May, or Atlantic City or Newport or Saratoga some of the social contingent are sure to while away a portion of the summer."[80] (Resort, ocean)

In many respects, elite African Americans' leisure practices mirrored those of their white counterparts. By the late 1800s, a number of privileged African Americans from the Mid-Atlantic, often business owners, educators or government employees, retreated from their homes in Washington, DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and other cities during the summer months to places where they could enjoy a cool sea breeze. As Terrell noted, several of the locales were enclaves within predominantly white resort communities and vacation destinations. Towns along New Jersey's shore, including Cape May, Atlantic City, and Asbury Park, proved particularly popular with Black elite who often stayed months or weeks at a time.[81] Here, African American businesspeople capitalized on the pleasant summer weather, growing amusements, and lax segregation by providing accommodations, such as cottages or hotels, for wealthy African American visitors who often preferred to enjoy their leisure time in private spaces.[82] During this period, throngs of African Americans visited Cape May, one of the nation's oldest resort communities.[83] The town's ocean air had drawn "the colored aristocracy," as one newspaper called it, since before the Civil War. In particular, the Banneker House, believed to be one of the nation's only summer resorts for free African Americans, provided Black men and women more than 30 rooms, entertainment, and hearty meals as early as 1845.[84] By the late 1800s a growing number of cottages and boarding homes catered to Black vacationers in town.[85]

In Atlantic City, well-to-do African Americans could board at Clinton Cottage, which its owners touted as having "all the comforts of home," and enjoy a night of entertainment at Fitzgerald Auditorium.[86] African American visitors to Asbury Park, a new town founded during

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[78] "Personal," *Arkansas Weekly Mansion*, March 15, 1884; "Hon. Frederick Douglass in Arkansas," *Leader*, February 16, 1889; "Senator Pinchback," *Weekly Louisianian*, June 19, 1875.
[79] "Our Washington Letter," *Cleveland Gazette*, September 8, 1883.
[80] Mary Church Terrell, "Society Among the Colored People of Washington," *The Voice of the Negro* 1 (1904): 156.
[81] "Locals," *Washington Bee*, August 27, 1887; "Long Branch, N.J.," *The Washington Bee*, August 27, 1887.
[82] Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction," 123.
[83] Jeffery M. Dorwart, *Cape May County, New Jersey: The Making of an American Resort Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).
[84] Barbara Dreyfuss, "Freedom's Corner," *Cape May Magazine*, January 23, 2020, https://www.capemaymag.com/freedoms-corner/; Banneker House is no longer extant.
[85] "Advertisement," *The Colored American*, July 9, 1898; "Advertisement," *The Colored American*, July 15, 1899.
[86] "Advertisement," *The Colored American*, May 6, 1899; "Advertisement," *The Colored American*, June 15, 1901; "Advertisement," *People's Advocate*, September 27, 1879; Goddard, "'Three Months to Hurry and Nine Months to Worry'," 166. Fitzgerald Auditorium closed in 1933 and in 1935 reopened under new ownership as Club Harlem a popular club and music venue. Headlining acts included Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington, Aretha Franklin, Cab Calloway, Sammy Davis Jr., James Brown, Sam Cooke, Ray Charles, the Temptations, Gladys Knight and the Pips, and Ella Fitzgerald. The club closed in the 1980s and was demolished after a storm in 1992.

Reconstruction, could find lodging at a number of cottages including Whitehead House or Cottage Royale which boasted "large, light and airy" rooms and other "first class" accommodations.[87] Black visitors to the popular Jersey Shore enjoyed a number of social activities including concerts, balls, fetes, lawn games, "[e]xcellent [f]ishing, [r]owing, and [s]ailing," in addition to swimming and sunbathing along secluded beaches.[88]

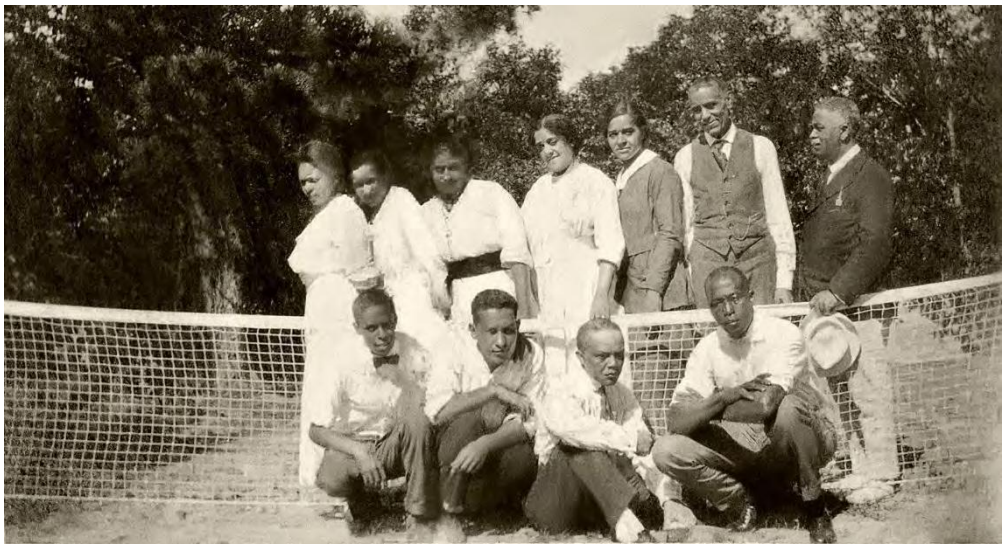

Figure 1: Shearer family and guests at Shearer Cottage 1918.
Image Courtesy of The Inn at Shearer Cottage, Martha's Vineyard.

Martha's Vineyard, a small island south of Cape Cod in Massachusetts, also proved to be a popular resort community for African Americans in the summer months beginning in the late 1800s. Often, white and Black visitors drawn to the island for religious meetings during that period would stay afterwards to enjoy the island's more secular charms. After an A.M.E. and A.M.E. Zion camp meeting in 1886, a number of Black parishioners took up lodging at several local cottages that catered to African Americans in the island town of Oak Bluffs (Resort, ocean). One paper reported that the ostensibly reserved crowd had gone "'bluffing' in the moonlight" and was "very enthusiastic over the pleasures of the trip."[89] The island's religious meetings and leisure pursuits also attracted a growing number of African American domestic servants, laborers, and aspiring business and property owners. Among them was Charles Shearer, a formerly enslaved man, and his wife, Henrietta. Charles, who had attended religious revivals on Martha's Vineyard, purchased property on the island in the late 1800s and established a laundry service which catered to white summer residents. Aware that the island's pleasant climate belied the discrimination that Black vacationers faced from white hotels and cottage owners, the couple later transformed their home into a guesthouse, replete with tennis courts, for

[87] "Advertisement," *New York Age*, June 14, 1890.
[88] "Advertisement," *New York Age*, June 14, 1890; "Howard's Letter," *State Journal*, August 23, 1884; Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction," 123.
[89] "New Bedford Notes," *New York Freeman*, August 28, 1886.

African American visitors in the early 1900s.[90] Their summer inn, the Shearer Cottage, helped anchor a growing Black enclave on the island.

Soothing ocean breezes were not the only factors that drew African Americans from the city into more scenic environs. Historical memory also played a part in shaping African American leisure and recreation in the outdoors in the late 1800s. African Americans held parades, other civic events and ceremonies in public spaces to commemorate historic events and challenge white historical narratives. Perhaps nowhere was this phenomenon more clearly evident than Harpers Ferry, West Virginia (Resort, river; Resort, mountain). There, the town's historical significance as the site of abolitionist John Brown's infamous raid on a federal armory, and the town's bucolic natural surroundings, made it a "fashionable resort" for leading African Americans.[91] It drew wealthy and aspiring urban Black residents, many of whom also visited Black enclaves along the Jersey shore, people like Library of Congress assistant librarian Daniel Murray and members of Black America's "select set."[92]

Located at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers and nestled among the Blue Ridge Mountains, the town was surrounded by natural splendor. Trails wound through the surrounding hillsides and along the river, where during the spring and summer months, visitors could enjoy picnics, birdwatching, and other activities in a charming natural setting beyond the reaches of industrialization. Visitors could also delight themselves at a private amusement park, replete with a beach, Ferris wheel, and other attractions, which occupied a narrow island on the Potomac River in town. A number of pleasant cottages catered to visitors, and beginning in the late 1870s, they could also find integrated dormitories at Storer College, an institution founded to educate African Americans shortly after the Civil War.[93] J. Max Barber, founding member of the Niagara Movement and present at the organization's conference at Harpers Ferry in 1906, reflected on the town's historic and natural allure, stating "The scenery and the history in and around this little mountain village possess an interest that is unusual [...] I had never yet felt as I felt at Harpers Ferry."[94] Harpers Ferry's popularity among Black tourists aroused white aggression and retaliation. Local whites deeply resented the presence of well-heeled African Americans honoring a figure who had attempted to lead a war on slavery and became a martyr to the abolitionist cause and worked to dissuade Black parties from visiting the area.[95]

As whites drew the color line at resorts and public accommodations and worked to suppress Black leisure activities in public settings, elite African Americans worked to create a separate

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[90] "Shearer Cottage's History on Martha's Vineyard," Shearer Cottage, accessed July 29, 2020, https://www.shearercottage.com/history; "Race Doings Budget," July 20, 1889. Shearer Cottage is extant, operational, and owned by descendants of Charles and Henrietta Shearer.
[91] *Weekly Louisianian*, July 26, 1879.
[92] Andrew W. Kahrl, "The Political Work of Leisure: Class, Recreation, and African American Commemoration at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, 1881–1931," *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 1 (2008): 64.
[93] Kahrl, "The Political Work of Leisure," 59; "Advertisement," *People's Advocate*, May 10, 1879. What remains of Storer College (closed 1955) and portions of the town of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and surrounding lands, including land in nearby Maryland and Virginia, are part of Harpers Ferry National Park. Storer College and portions of Harpers Ferry are also on the National Register of Historic Places (Harpers Ferry Historic District, NRHP, 1979).
[94] Kahrl, "The Political Work of Leisure," 60.
[95] Kahrl, "The Political Work of Leisure," 67.

and private leisure world of their own. After he and his wife were denied accommodations at the white-owned Bay Ridge resort on Maryland's Western Shore in the summer of 1890, Charles Douglass, the son of the famed abolitionist and orator, set out to acquire waterfront property and establish a resort for fellow elite Black families. Douglass subsequently purchased 40 acres of land from an African American farming family located next to Bay Ridge resort, and in 1894, began selling lots to friends and family at Highland Beach (Resort, bay), the "first . . . seaside resort owned and controlled by a colored man in America."[96] From the outset, Highland Beach was fashioned as an exclusive, elite summer vacation community for a select set of Black America. Low-lying trees shrouded the community's entrance, concealing its residents from the prying eyes of hostile white residents and thwarted the efforts of Black nonresidents who attempted to enjoy the enclave's small shore.[97] The poet Paul Laurence Dunbar attested to Highland Beach's small, exclusive character in 1901. Reminiscing about the previous summer he shared that "the very best" had flocked to the community for "such a gathering of this race as few outside of our great family circle have ever seen."[98]

Figure 2: Brothers Francis and Monroe Gregory fishing at Highland Beach with the Twin Oaks cottage in the background, ca. 1920s. Courtesy of the Highland Beach, MD Frederick Douglass Museum and Cultural Center.

[96] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours,* 89.

[97] Andrew W. Kahrl, "'The Slightest Semblance of Unruliness': Steamboat Excursions, Pleasure Resorts, and the Emergence of Segregation Culture on the Potomac River," *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 4 (2008): 1112; Ted Chase, Theodore Hudson, and Daniel Nelson, *Highland Beach: The First 100 Years*, ed. Daniel Nelson (Highland Beach, MD: Highland Beach Historical Commission, 1993). Highland Beach remains a Black beach community today, with some of the cottages built in the early 1900s still in use. "Twin Oaks," a summer home built for Frederick Douglass by his sons in 1893 (though he passed away before he was able to occupy the home), is today a museum and cultural center and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See Donna M. Ware, "Douglass Summer House (Twin Oaks)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/106776116.

[98] Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Negro Society in Washington," (1901) in *Sport of the Gods, and Other Essential Writings*, eds. Shelley Fisher Fishkin and David Bradley (New York: Modern Library, 2005), 288. Paul Laurence Dunbar's Dayton, Ohio home is on the National Register of Historic Places (Paul Laurence Dunbar House, NRHP, 1966) and part of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park. The Paul Laurence Dunbar House was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962.

Black Working-Class Amusements in Nineteenth-Century America

Though privileged Black vacationers, such as those at Highland Beach, preferred exclusive communities where they could avoid what Dunbar dismissed as "the peasant or serving class," they frequently encountered heterogeneous leisure spaces with a growing contingent of the Black working class.[99] As railroad and other travel became less expensive, inland and seaside resort communities became more accessible to everyday men and women. For Black residents of Philadelphia, a boat ride to Cape May could be found for seventy-five cents, a train trip to Atlantic City could be had for one dollar, and tickets to Asbury Park could be purchased for fifty cents.[100] Railroads also aggressively advertised leisure spaces along their routes to generate revenue on the days which were not highly trafficked. In advertisements, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad extolled Harpers Ferry's natural beauty and historical significance to Black audiences.[101] The proliferation of railroads also diminished commercial demand for steamboats and their proprietors, too, increasingly sought the dollar of African American pleasure seekers in the late 1800s.[102] Excursions marketed by railroads and steamboats found a ready audience in Black churches, fraternal societies, and other voluntary organizations.

Figure 3: An excursion party boards a steamboat owned and operated by J.O. Holmes and his crew in the D.C. area, ca. 1931. Courtesy of the Scurlock Studio Records, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Excursion trips down the Potomac River or to a seaside resort offered poor Black Americans an escape from congested urban communities and complemented the insurance, mutual aid, and

[99] Dunbar, "Negro Society in Washington," 288.
[100] Brian E. Alnutt, "'The Negro Excursions': Recreational Outings among Philadelphia African Americans, 1876–1926," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 129, no. 1 (2005): 94.
[101] Kahrl, "The Political Work of Leisure," 59, 62.
[102] Kahrl, "'The Slightest Semblance of Unruliness,'" 1113–1114.

uplift of Black churches and social societies provided to urban communities, raising both spirits and funds. For the urban Black working class, historian Brian Alnutt writes, railroad and steamboat excursions "offered an opportunity to escape with a convivial, and one might even say formidable, group of fellow African Americans to a festival environment removed from the daily challenges of racial friction and poverty."[103] Forced to work long hours for little pay, Black workers relished the chance to board a train or steamboat and escape, for an afternoon or evening, into the countryside or down a river. So popular were excursions among the urban working poor of many cities that railroad and steamboat companies ran special excursions on Thursdays, the customary day off for domestic workers.[104]

Elite African Americans deplored the popularity of excursions among the Black working poor. The wealthy, W. E. B. Du Bois wrote in 1897, were likely to "depreciate and belittle and sneer at [poor Blacks'] means of recreation."[105] Across the country, opponents admonished that the resources that poor African Americans spent on excursions could be invested in enterprise that benefited the race and improved African Americans' economic station.[106] Du Bois observed that elite African Americans tended to look upon the "legitimate" recreational "pursuit" of poor African Americans "as time wasted and energy misspent."[107] An 1889 editorial of *The Christian Recorder*, the newspaper of the Philadelphia-based A. M. E. Church echoed his sentiments and demanded its readers "Stop" their "excursions" because "[i]t will require fully" readers' "time and money in meeting the approaching winter." It concluded with "[l]ay in your coal," a reminder to plan ahead for the winter months.[108] Middle- and upper-class African Americans also thought the behavior the lower classes exhibited at excursions was unbecoming and undermined attempts at respectability and threatened perceptions of the whole race. In his 1899 study of African Americans in Philadelphia, Du Bois recorded that "excursions were frequent in summer," and were "accompanied often by much fighting and drinking."[109] The *New York Globe* warned Black excursionists to be prudent in their dancing and to avoid "over-indulgence in ardent liquors."[110] So contested were excursions within the broader African American community that officials at Storer College, in Harpers Ferry, banned the activities for students.[111]

The growing presence of African Americans in the public sphere, privileged and otherwise, also elicited derision from whites. African Americans in the late 1800s increasingly expressed their independence and frequently ignored the variety of informal measures whites erected in public places to maintain racial segregation. In Asbury Park on the Jersey Shore, African American tourists failed to heed "clock-time segregation," which asked Black patrons to delay their leisurely pursuits on local boardwalks until after 10:30 p.m., nor did they limit their visits to the end of the summer season as encouraged. African Americans on the Jersey Shore, a writer for the

[103] Alnutt, "'The Negro Excursions'," 81.
[104] Alnutt, "'The Negro Excursions'," 94.
[105] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Problem of Amusement," *Southern Workman* 26 (1897): 181.
[106] Alnutt, "'The Negro Excursions,'" 80–85.
[107] Du Bois, "The Problem of Amusement," 181.
[108] Alnutt, "'The Negro Excursions,'" 81.
[109] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899), 320.
[110] Alnutt, "'The Negro Excursions,'" 82.
[111] Kahrl, "The Political Work of Leisure," 66.

New York Times lamented, became "bolder year by year."[112] Further south, African Americans refused seating in smoking and second-class railroad cars opting for first-class and ladies' cars.[113] Across the nation, whites responded to African Americans' assertiveness by expanding and tightening Jim Crow—drawing the color line in places of amusement and other venues in the 1890s. Reflecting on the growth of segregation, Sam Gadsden, a Black resident of South Carolina born in 1882 insisted, "The white people began to begrudge these niggers their running around and doing just as they chose." He added, "That's all there is to segregation, that caused the whole thing. The white people couldn't master these niggers any more so they took up the task of intimidating them."[114] When in 1893, African Americans attempted to subvert new segregation ordinances in Asbury Park, the mayor enforced the legislation with the help of police power.[115]

The loose and informal rules that whites had used to govern African Americans in public places were, beginning in the 1890s, increasingly replaced by formal segregation statutes. In 1890 Louisiana passed legislation that segregated Black and white passengers on railroads. In response, African American and Afro-creole activists in New Orleans recruited Homer Plessy, a fair-skinned shoemaker, to challenge the legislation two years later. In the resulting court case, Louisiana's supreme court ruled against Plessy, concluding that racial segregation statutes did not violate the U.S. Constitution so long as the "separate" accommodations were "equal." In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling in its infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. With the Supreme Court's blessing, southern states and localities began enacting a flurry of segregation statutes in an ever-expanding realm of public spaces and accommodations.[116]

"What Shall We Do?" asked one African American man several years later after segregation had become entrenched. Noting how segregation threatened African American leisure and recreation in the outdoors, he remarked "Perilous times these are. Every Negro group and gathering coming and going is closely scrutinized. [...] A walk through the parks and a seat upon the lawn in some of the beautiful resident parts will almost cause a riot."[117]

As in the case of Highland Beach, African Americans responded to the increased strictures of segregation by developing their own outdoor leisure and recreation spaces. George Wall, of Atlantic City, established a popular beachfront venue in the 1890s which included bath houses, showers, and other features that was celebrated as the "Great Mecca" of Black leisure accommodations. The establishment served as "headquarters" for many Black vacationers and excursionists and drew crowds "from as far West as Chicago and as far North as Boston" during the summer months.[118] Black beachgoers also laid claim to small patches of beach in front of

[112] Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction," 49–50.
[113] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind,* 230.
[114] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind,* 230.
[115] Goldberg, "The Retreats of Reconstruction," 88.
[116] Blair L. M. Kelley, *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy V. Ferguson* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 56–57, 64–65, 79–81.
[117] J. R. Richardson, "What Shall We Do?" *Topeka Plaindealer*, May 30, 1913.
[118] "Going out with the Tide," *The Colored American*, September 3, 1898. George Wall's beachfront venue closed in 1925.

Walls' venue and later a few blocks away.[119] In 1901, Washington, DC, Black businessman Lewis Jefferson acquired a stake in Notley Hall, a resort and landing on the Maryland side of the Potomac River just south of the nation's capital, renamed it Washington Park (Amusement Park), and began marketing the grounds to Black excursion parties. Jefferson invested heavily in the park's success. He installed a roller coaster, penny arcade, fortune-telling tent, theater, dancing pavilion, and other attractions. In 1904, he purchased the *Jane Mosley*, a large steamboat, to ferry African Americans to and from the riverside retreat. Writing in 1908, Mary Church Terrell described the grounds as "well equipped with everything lending to amuse the people [...] it is the finest pier I have ever seen anywhere." Jefferson appealed to Black Washingtonians' desire to enjoy their moments of leisure in dignity and spend their earnings on a Black-owned establishment. "Before the construction of Washington Park," he reminded patrons in advertisements for the resort, "absolutely no place of recreation was afforded the people of our race."[120]

Creating a White Wilderness

During the same years when whites were drawing the color line in places of recreation across the South and Northeast, in the West, a burgeoning conservation movement was seeking to reimagine humans' relationship with the natural world in ways that would come to reshape the meaning and lived experience of race in America. As urban centers grew in size and density in the early 1800s, a growing number of white Americans sought solace in nature. The nature writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau on the sublime essence of the wilderness would inspire a generation of outdoorsmen, none more influential than John Muir.

John Muir emigrated to central Wisconsin from Scotland with his family in 1849 as an adolescent. He kept busy on the family farm before leaving home in 1860 to first pursue a career as an inventor then later enrolling at the University of Wisconsin. It is at the university where he first encountered the writings of Emerson and Thoreau, both of whom would strongly influence his views on nature. Disinterested in the travails of his adopted country, Muir absconded to Canada during the American Civil War. Following the war, Muir embarked on a solo walk from Indiana to the Gulf of Mexico. In his account of the journey, *1,000 Mile Walk to the Gulf*, Muir described the freedpeople of the region as if they were another feature of the region's natural landscape, akin to the trees, plants, and animals that roamed the land. In one instance, he described a young Black boy who assisted him in crossing a river as a "bug," "queer specimen" and "India rubber doll," with hair "like the wool of a merino sheep."[121]

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[119] Alnutt, "The Negro Excursions," 102.
[120] Kahrl, "'The Slightest Semblance of Unruliness,'" 1118–1119. The land that was formerly Washington Park was developed into a residential subdivision in the 1980s. "Preliminary Report on the Archaeological Investigations of the Notley Hall Amusement Park (18pr311): Phase I Reconnaissance Survey" (Washington, DC: Mark Vogel Companies, 1986).
[121] Dorceta E. Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 64–65; Sally M. Miller, *John Muir: Life and Work* (University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 3; Paul Outka, *Race and Nature: From Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 156–169.

Following his southern sojourn, Muir journeyed west to California. There, he took up nature writing, regularly penning articles for several local and national periodicals. By the late 1800s, he emerged as one of the nation's leading naturalists.[122] His writings encouraged an entire generation of white Americans to revere the wilderness and see nature as a space for emotional and spiritual regeneration.[123] Muir advocated for the preservation of western lands and founded the Sierra Club in 1892, an alpine club dedicated to "exploring, enjoying and rendering accessible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast, and to enlist the support and cooperation of the people and the government in preserving the forests and other features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains."[124] His ardent championing of the west earned the attention of a small contingent of wealthy, white men from the east coast—figures such as Gifford Pinchot, George Bird Grinnell, and Theodore Roosevelt—also interested in conservation. Muir would frequently lobby or partner with—and occasionally contest—this privileged set to develop the beginnings of the National Park System.

The conservation movement that culminated in the creation of the National Park System reflected the elite backgrounds and gender and racial beliefs of this cohort of elite white men. Men such as Theodore Roosevelt hailed from patrician, east coast families whose privilege allowed them to embark on extended hunting and fishing trips and experience nature as a form of leisure, rather than as a means of subsistence and survival. For Roosevelt, the strenuousness of hunting scarce game encouraged masculinity, which he believed was threatened by modernity and the increasing presence of women in the public sphere. Roosevelt exclaimed that the chase, "is among the best of all national pastimes; it cultivates that vigorous manliness, for the lack of which in a nation, as in an individual, the possession of no other qualities can possibly atone."[125] To that end, Roosevelt and a group of close friends established the Boone and Crockett Club, the first organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, in 1887.[126] Its membership restricted to elite white men, the Boone and Crockett Club exerted its political influence through lobbying to reform game laws and protect forests and wildlands from destruction.[127]

Among the Club's earliest members was an Ivy League-educated New Yorker named Madison Grant. A child of privilege, Grant had eschewed a career in law in favor of a life of leisure, embarking on extended hunting expeditions in the West and maintaining an active social life among New York City's elite set. When not hunting for wild game or maintaining a busy social calendar, Grant fretted over the threat that immigrants from southern and eastern Europe posed to America's white Anglo-Saxon heritage. Disturbed by the strange customs, unfamiliar languages, and religious practices of these newcomers, Grant grew determined to preserve the white race just as his fellow conservationists were working to conserve the wildlands and forests of the West. In 1892, he and his brother started their own organization, Society of Colonial Wars, a fraternal society limited to white men "of good moral character and reputation" whose

[122] Miller, *John Muir*, 4–6.
[123] Outka, *Race and Nature*, 155.
[124] Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement,* 306.
[125] Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement,* 74–76.
[126] Jonathan Peter Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (Burlington: University of Vermont Press, 2009), 1–6, 15–16; Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement,* 69–73, 181–182.
[127] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 16.

ancestors had fought in the wars of the colonial period. The Society of Colonial Wars emerged as one of the most active groups that challenged the tides of new immigrants and their claims to American citizenship by celebrating members' Anglo-Saxon genealogies and laying exclusive claim to the country's heritage.[128]

Grant's efforts to restrict immigration dovetailed with his and fellow Boone and Crockett Club members' efforts to conserve lands in the West.[129] In 1894, more than twenty years after the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, the group successfully lobbied Congress to pass the Yellowstone Park Protective Act.[130] Upon assuming the presidency in 1901, Theodore Roosevelt worked with chief U.S. forester and fellow Boone and Crockett member Gifford Pinchot to more than triple the acreage of national forests during his administration.[131] In the 1910s, the group also lobbied successfully for the creation of Glacier and Denali national parks.[132] As Steward Udall, former secretary of the Interior reflected years later, "When Theodore Roosevelt became President the Boone and Crockett wildlife creed … became national policy."[133]

For Grant, Roosevelt, and other turn-of-the-twentieth-century conservationists, protection of wildlands and native species and preservation of the white race were inseparable and, at times, indistinguishable. Alarmed by the findings of a study showing declining birth-rates among Anglo Americans, President Roosevelt implored "older stock" white Americans to procreate more and fend off the threat of "race suicide."[134] Grant, meanwhile, began to proselytize the pseudoscience of eugenics, the belief that an individual's personality characteristics were inheritable in a similar manner as physical attributes, an idea championed by many including his close friend, Charles Benedict Davenport.[135]

Eugenicists' campaigns for selective breeding and sterilization often drew upon the language and logic of wildlife management as espoused by conservationists. As parks needed to manage their mule deer and elk populations, so too did human society need to control the reproductive capacities of its own undesirables.[136] Writing some years later to his friend and fellow conservationist Henry Fairfield Osborn, Grant suggested that both conservation and eugenics were "attempts to save as much as possible of the old America."[137]

In 1916, Grant published *The Passing of the Great Race*, perhaps the most influential eugenics text of the century. Though Grant's eugenics predecessors and counterparts perceived northern Europeans to be inherently superior, they also believed that through careful breeding, all of

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[128] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 6–15. See also Jedediah Purdy, "Environmentalism's Racist History," *The New Yorker*, August 13, 2015, https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/environmentalisms-racist-history. In addition to the Society of Colonial Wars, the Daughters of the American Revolution was established in 1890.
[129] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 28.
[130] Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement*, 182, 305*,* 228–229; Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 27, 57, 77.
[131] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 57; Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement,* 276.
[132] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 67–70.
[133] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 55.
[134] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 97–99.
[135] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 92–96, 126.
[136] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 134–137.
[137] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* xiii.

mankind could achieve the qualities this superior group supposedly possessed. Grant, however, rejected that assumption, and instead posited that the "Nordic" race was not only superior, but that all other "races" were inherently inferior and irredeemable.[138] "It is capital," wrote Roosevelt of the book, "in purpose, in vision, in grasp of the facts our people most need to realize."[139] In the years following the book's publication, advocates would employ Grant's concept of a master race in need of protection from threats foreign and domestic to condone the lynching of Black people, argue for strict immigration control in the U.S., justify genocide in Europe, and more.[140] Grant later served as vice-president of the Immigration Restriction League and fought successfully for immigration restriction.[141] Fellow Boone and Crockett Club member and former head of the U.S. Forest Service Gifford Pinchot, meanwhile, served as a delegate to the first international eugenics conference in 1912 and the second conference in 1921, the latter organized by Grant.[142] Pinchot was also a member of the American Eugenics Society from 1925 to 1935, a propaganda and lobbying organization founded by Grant and others.[143] In 1918, Grant organized the Galton Society, named for the father of eugenics, Sir William Henry Galton, with the help of other Boone and Crockett conservationists, including his co-founders of the Save-the-Redwoods League, John C. Merriam, a professor at the University of California, and Henry Fairfield Osborn, director of the American Museum of Natural History.[144]

As they worked to bolster the white "race," conservationists also refashioned the wilderness as a white space. The creation of the nation's first national parks in the West all involved a violent process of Native removal.[145] Following the incorporation of Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant national parks in 1890, the U.S. government's preservation efforts continued in piecemeal fashion over the next twenty years. Out of growing concern over park funding and protection, conservationists called for the creation of a federal bureau to oversee the country's national parks. The parks were, as one administrator called them, "floating orphans" in the Department of the Interior. In 1913, the Secretary of the Interior created a National Parks field office to oversee the country's national monuments and parks. Then in 1916, Congress passed and President Woodrow Wilson signed into law an act creating the National Park Service. Stephen Mather, a wealthy Chicago businessman, assumed control of the fledgling office two years later. A preservationist and long-time member of the Sierra Club, Mather used his personal wealth to elevate the parks and its tiny office. He raised the salaries of his few employees, purchased property for parks, encouraged his wealthy friends to donate to national parks, and coordinated a campaign to encourage middle- and upper-class Americans to visit the nations' parks in lieu of Europe during the Great War. The growing attention Mather afforded to the nation's parks

[138] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 140.
[139] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 138*,* 158.
[140] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 168, xii.
[141] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 199–233.
[142] Garland E. Allen, "'Culling the Herd': Eugenics and the Conservation Movement in the United States, 1900–1940," *Journal of the History of Biology* 46, no. 1 (2013): 36.
[143] Allen, "'Culling the Herd,'" 36; Spiro, *Defending the Master Race,* 179–189.
[144] Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, 267–275, 304.
[145] Carolyn Merchant, "Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History," *Environmental History* 8, no. 3 (2003), 382; Mark Spence, "Dispossessing the Wilderness: Yosemite Indians and the National Park Ideal, 1864–1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 1 (1996), 29–31.

yielded success and, following the National Park Service's creation, Mather and his office received official administrative authority.[146]

The National Park Service remained a skeleton operation in its early years. Mather leaned on his associates for administration and continued to solicit support from wealthy donors for park improvements.[147] Despite its shoestring budget and small staff, the department's policies and programs had an outsized effect on how some groups experienced the outdoors. Indian removal was the watchword for early park officials. At Glacier National Park, once part of a Blackfeet reservation, the Park Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs coordinated to end the Blackfeet people's rights to the land after its inception as a park in 1910.[148] At Yosemite, in the 1910s and 1920s, park officials limited Natives' cultural expression, encouraging them to conform to practices of Plains nations. Later, in the early 1930s, park officials relocated the Natives' valley village so that it would be separate and apart from other developments in the valley. It also placed the village under park control so that, according to one official, "the Superintendent could prevent the influx of outside Indians and [...] maintain a discipline now impossible." The development capped a surreptitious effort by park officials to gradually remove natives from the valley's public sphere.[149]

The park service also quietly discouraged African Americans from visiting the nation's parks. At a 1922 conference, the National Parks Association executive secretary Robert Sterling Yard commented that "[o]ne of the objections to colored people is that if they come in large groups they will be conspicuous, and will not only be objected to by other visitors, but will cause trouble [...] and it will be impossible to serve them." The official noted "Individual cases can be handled, although even this is awkward, but organized parties could not be taken care of" and though the service could not "openly discriminate against them, they should be told that the parks have no facilities for taking care of them."[150] Yard's desire to exclude Black people from national parks was all the more notable given his belief in these same parks' potential to bring people of different classes and regions together and thereby promote and advance American democracy. "Here," Yard wrote, "the social distances so insisted on at home just don't exist. Perhaps for the first time one realizes the common America—and loves it…. Elsewhere travelers divide among resorts and hotels according to their ability to pay and maintain their home attitudes. In the national parks all are just Americans." Or, rather, *white* Americans.[151]

Among the early leadership in the national parks movement, Yard was far from alone in harboring racist attitudes and beliefs. Several contributors to the park service and members of the park service's educational advisory board championed varying principles of eugenics in the 1920s and 1930s—including Vernon Kellogg, John C. Merriam, and Charles M. Goethe, a businessman and conservationist, who developed the bureau's interpretive program. Even Harold Bryant, appointed assistant director of the National Park Service in charge of research and

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[146] Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement,* 329–341.
[147] Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement,* 341.
[148] Spence, "Dispossessing the Wilderness," 45.
[149] Spence, "Dispossessing the Wilderness," 47, 51–56.
[150] Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 126.
[151] Shaffer, *See America First,* 125.

education in 1930, was associated with a California eugenics organization.[152] The patina of discrimination over the nation's parks would begin to wither ever so in the late 1930s.[153]

Park officials' reluctance to meet the recreational needs of Black Americans reflected white Americans' growing anxiety over Black leisure and recreation. Under slavery, leisure and recreation served utilitarian purposes—ensuring a docile, primarily agricultural labor force. Yet as industrialization accelerated in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Black people's seemingly innocuous amusements came to be seen by the white public in a much more ominous light. Because Black leisure spaces and activities did not bolster white economic power and control and instead, increasingly provided economic opportunities for enterprising Black businessmen, these spaces became subject to surveillance and repression, and Black pleasure seekers to criminalization. White newspapers portrayed Black leisure spaces in turn-of-the-century cities as criminal dens, home to thieves, drunkards and gamblers. In Washington, white newspapers gave Jefferson's Washington Park—which played host to family gatherings and drew Black luminaries such as Mary Church Terrell to its grounds—the moniker "Razor Beach," an unruly, dangerous dive. Law enforcement responded accordingly, conducting routine raids on weekend gatherings, harassing guests, and sparking confrontations with Black crowds that, in turn, were used to justify further repressive measures.[154]

As the walls of segregation closed in, Black Americans continued to push at its boundaries, circumvent its strictures, and transcend its humiliating conventions. Claiming time and space for leisure, on their own terms and among their own people, became one way in which Black Americans expressed their rejection of Jim Crow and determination to be free. Indeed, whites' mockery and derision of Black leisure activities betrayed a certain unease over these performances of Black freedom, especially when they so closely mirrored whites' own. Whites' fears of the potential of leisure to not only provide an outlet for Black expression but also threaten the color line itself, grew in direct proportion to Black mobility. As millions of Black Americans migrated to cities in the North beginning in the early 20th century, outdoor leisure spaces would become a battleground in larger struggles over race and opportunity in an industrial society.

[152] Susan R. Schrepfer, *The Fight to Save the Redwoods: A History of the Environmental Reform, 1917–1978* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 43–44; Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, DC: History Division, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1986), 15; Allen, "'Culling the Herd,'" 48–61.
[153] Terrence Young, "'A Contradiction in Democratic Government': W. J. Trent, Jr., and the Struggle to Desegregate National Park Campgrounds," *Environmental History* 14, no. 4 (2009): 651–82.
[154] Kahrl, "'The Slightest Semblance of Unruliness,'" 1110, 1121–1123.

Chapter Two

"Never a Place to Play": The Great Migration Era (1900–1935)

In the summer of 1931, the Detroit Urban League opened Green Pastures Camp (Campground) to African American children from Detroit. Shortly after its opening, one publication hailed it "the finest free summer camp in the State of Michigan and probably one of the finest in the whole United States."[1] The Detroit Urban League's former director contended the camp held "everything that is beautiful in country life" and that the "variety of scenery" on its grounds exceeded that of other summer camps. He also believed the camp to be a "counter-irritant" for the "evils" of modern urban life.[2] At the time the only camp near Detroit that did not discriminate against African American children, it proved immensely popular. Parents and children alike pleaded for the camp's director to make exceptions to the limited number of youth the facility could accept each year.[3]

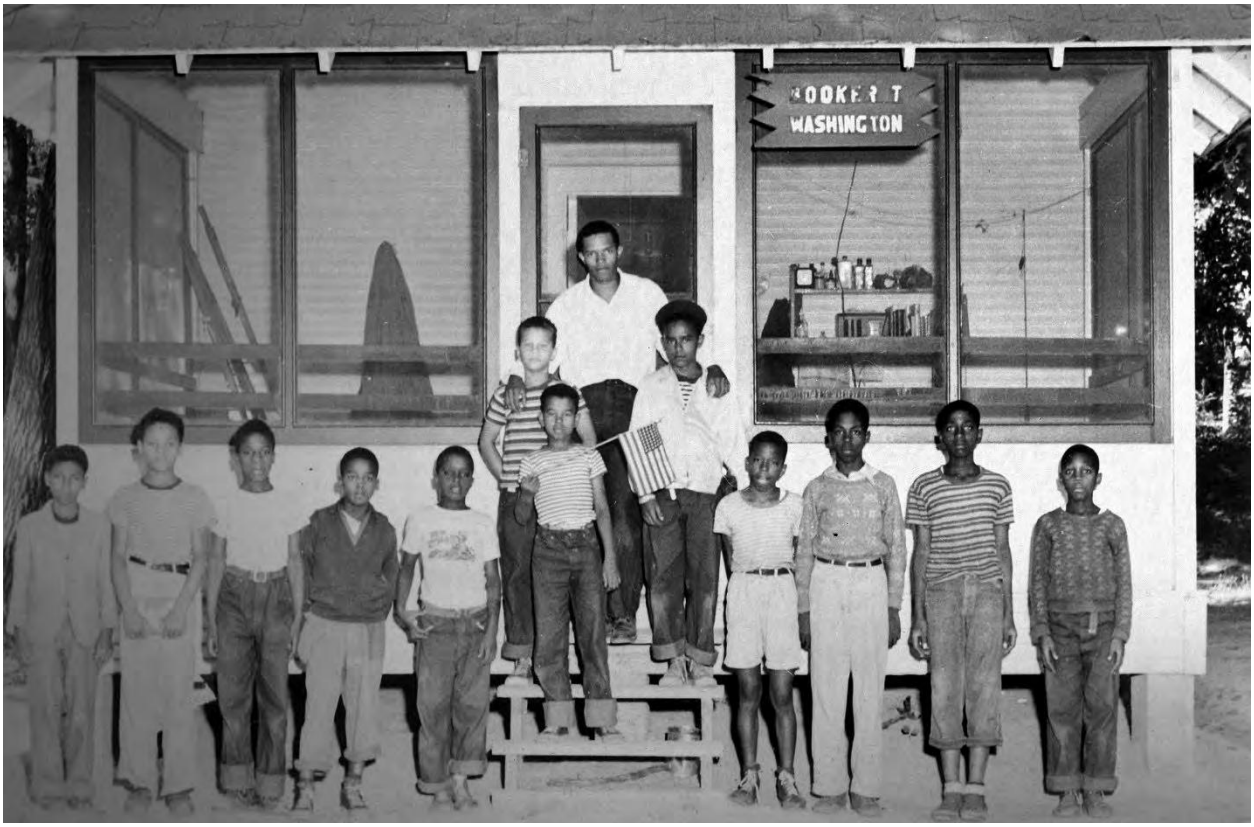

Figure 1: *Swimming at the Lake at Green Pastures, ca. 1931*. Campers at Green Pastures Camp in Michigan, sponsored by the Detroit Urban League. Courtesy of the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

[1] Forrester B. Washington, "Deluxe Summer Camp for Colored Children," *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life* 9 (1921): 303.
[2] Richard Walter Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 76.
[3] Washington, "Deluxe Summer Camp for Colored Children," 307; Walter, *Life for Us Is What We Make It*, 76–77. Green Pastures closed in 1965 due to a lack of funds and the site is no longer extant.

The paucity of play and recreational outlets for African American families and children in Detroit was not unique to the city. Neither were the creative methods in which Black parents and social reformers tackled the problem. In the early 1900s, hundreds of thousands of African Americans left the American South for the chance at a better life in the industrial cities of the North. Black migrants chafed at the South's limited job prospects, endemic violence, and dehumanizing Jim Crow caste system, and were drawn to the prospect of better opportunities and the chance to live freely (including, in outdoor recreational spaces) in northern cities. Once they arrived, however, Black migrants encountered new and familiar forms of racial discrimination, segregation, and violence, this time at the hands of European immigrants with whom they competed for jobs, housing, and opportunity. Often, those larger contests played out in urban parks, beaches, and playgrounds, which, as the historian Andrew J. Diamond observed, became "flashpoints for violence" and "central settings within which urban residents constructed, negotiated, defended, and reified racial and ethnic identities[.]"[4] Along with challenging the color line in recreational settings, urban Blacks during the Great Migration era also worked to acquire and develop campgrounds and rural retreats, and establish organizations and programs dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Black urban populations through facilitating access to natural settings outside of industrial cities. This chapter follows the journey of African Americans from the South to the urban North in the first decades of the twentieth century and examines the role of recreation in shaping Black dreams of freedom and efforts to reconstitute community and improve social conditions in new urban settings.

Drawing the Color Line

By the early 1900s, Blacks living in the South had ample evidence to suggest that social conditions in the region were getting worse, not better. White supremacist violence was unrelenting, a host of state and local voting laws had effectively disenfranchised the race, and segregation statutes were spreading into every corner of southern society. Ironically, white southerners' purported fears of social mixing among the races (the gravest of southern "taboos") did not manifest in laws mandating segregation in places of play. Segregation ordinances in places of outdoor recreation were comparatively rare and varied by place, with cities more likely to mandate segregation in public recreation than rural areas.[5] The dearth of such laws should not, however, be interpreted as a sign of white acceptance of integrated play. Rather, it could as often indicate that societal prohibitions against whites and Blacks sharing social space together were so thorough, and so effectively policed through fear, intimidation, and the threat of violence, that many localities might have seen such laws as superfluous. Another factor was the general lack of organized and dedicated recreation space in the early twentieth-century South. Many recreational

[4] Andrew J. Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multicultural City, 1908-1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 48, 5.
[5] As late as 1954, only a handful of southern states had passed legislation which required "segregation in places of public recreation." See Robert McKay, "Segregation and Public Recreation," *Virginia Law Review* 40, no. 6 (1954): 701.

pursuits remained a novelty and public recreational spaces and facilities a rarity in the late 1800s and early 1900s.[6]

That began to change in the early 1900s as a new wave of progressive reformers called for increased public investment in improving outdoor environments and addressing social problems and community needs. This included investment in public recreation. As southern cities began devoting public funds to build new parks and playgrounds and establish public recreational programs in the early 1900s, many also introduced, for the first time, laws mandating racial segregation in places of play. The city of Charlotte, North Carolina, established its first segregation ordinance in recreational spaces following the establishment of Independence Park in 1904. As with all aspects of Jim Crow, the purpose of the laws was to enforce Black subordination, not racial separatism. The city created an exemption for Black caretakers of white children, who were permitted to enter the park.[7]

When a city passed a segregation ordinance in places of recreation, it was often in reaction to Black defiance of white-imposed "customs." In Birmingham, Alabama, for example, city officials enacted an ordinance barring Blacks from the city's parks following a number of complaints from white residents who objected to their presence in these spaces.[8] By contrast, the city of Richmond, Virginia, lacked any segregation statutes regarding public parks, perhaps because, according to one survey of the city's Black residents in the 1920s, Black Richmonders knew to stay away. Only African American "nurses in charge of white children or ... chauffeurs of white-owned motor cars" said they frequented the city's parks.[9]

Just as the passage of segregation statutes were an indication of Black defiance, southern cities' designation of certain areas for "colored" use often came in response to Black demands. In 1912, the city of Nashville, Tennessee, opened Hadley Park (Local Park), the "first known public park established strictly for blacks" in the nation, after Black community leaders had rejected the city's attempts to cordon off small sections of existing city parks for Black use.[10] To be clear, the color line in places of play only applied to Black people. Even in places that whites designated for "colored only," Black people were never free from the threat of white surveillance and

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[6] Kevin G. McQueeney, "Playing With Jim Crow: African American Private Parks in Early Twentieth Century New Orleans" (Master's thesis, University of New Orleans, 2015), 37; Craig Allan Kaplowitz, "A Breath of Fresh Air: Segregation, Parks, and Progressivism in Nashville, Tennessee, 1900–1920," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (1998): 137–138.

[7] Emiene Wright, "No Mountain High Enough," *Our State*, April 27, 2020, https://www.ourstate.com/charlotte-outdoor-afro-hiking-club/; Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 153. Independence Park is still in use and today is the oldest public park in Charlotte.

[8] Charles Connerly, *The Most Segregated City in America: City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2005), 36.

[9] Richmond Council of Social Agencies, *The Negro in Richmond, Virginia: The Report of the Negro Welfare Survey Committee* (Richmond, VA: Council of Social Agencies, 1929), 77.

[10] Kaplowitz, "A Breath of Fresh Air," 134, 138–43. Hadley Park remains extant and is maintained by the city of Nashville.

invasion. Whites could freely enter "colored" space at their pleasure and did. Whites "looking for excitement" routinely visited Black cafes, "joints" and other establishments.[11]

Even as whites worked to cement Blacks' second-class status in law, some white southerners remained sensitive to Blacks' demands, if for no other reason than the region's economy remained utterly dependent on their labor. And as African Americans began to leave the region in droves beginning in the 1910s, some "enlightened" southern whites (often, corporate executives and plantation owners with a financial stake in the ready availability of cheap Black labor on farms and in industries) began calling for increased public and private expenditures on "colored" recreation. The white president of Greenville, South Carolina's local recreation association remarked that "business men took no active interest [in the black citizenry] until they commenced to feel the pinch of migration." By the 1920s, several prominent southern industrial corporations, including United States Steel, the American Cast Iron Pipe Company, the Fairbanks-Morse Scale Company, and others, had responded to the pinch of Black out-migration by installing playgrounds for their African American employees.[12]

At the same time white southerners were working to placate Black labor unrest through recreational provisions, they were also looking to use public parks and outdoor spaces to fortify segregation in other arenas. As early as 1903, Nashville's park commission contended parks would "cause the development of the beautiful suburbs contiguous to the city, and thereby necessarily greatly enhance the value of all property." A few years later, the city mounted a failed bid to turn a dilapidated neighborhood with a large African American population, Black Bottom, into a city park.[13] Birmingham saw similar value in using park space to affect the city's racial geography and bolster white property values. In 1935, the city commission transformed three lots into a whites-only park to buffer white homes threatened by Black encroachment.[14]

Just as whites-only parks aimed to mark certain areas of cities as white spaces, the recreational spaces that southern cities and towns begrudgingly allocated to African Americans served to reinforce and give a spatial dimension to Black inferiority. Black parks and playgrounds in southern cities and towns were often small in size, poorly equipped, inadequately maintained, and located in remote areas.[15] Without exception, the number and total acreage of Black recreational space in southern cities was vastly less than that which was available to whites. By the 1920s, the city of New Orleans maintained 17 public playgrounds for white children but only one playground for Black children.[16] Private organizations similarly ignored Blacks' recreational needs. In West Virginia, for example, the 4-H program operated camps for white youth in forty-four counties, but not a single camp for Black children. Only after more than 10 years of

[11] Charles S. Johnson, *Background to Patterns of Negro Segregation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1943), 143–146.
[12] Jeffrey J. Pilz, "The Beginnings of Organized Play for Black America: E. T. Attwell and the PRAA," *Journal of Negro History* 70, no. 3/4 (1985): 68.
[13] Kaplowitz, "A Breath of Fresh Air," 137.
[14] Connerly, *The Most Segregated City in America*, 120.
[15] Forrester B. Washington, "Recreational Facilities for the Negro," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 140 (1928): 274–275. See also, for example, Richmond Council of Social Agencies, *The Negro in Richmond, Virginia,* 80.
[16] Henry McGuinn, "Recreation," in *Negro Problems in Cities*, ed. T. J. Woofter (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1928), 233.

lobbying and coalition building by Black leaders in the state did Camp Washington-Carver (Camp Washington-Carver Complex, NRHP, 1980) (Campground) open its doors in 1942 becoming one of the earliest Black 4-H camps in the nation.[17]

The dearth of recreational opportunities for Black families and children in the South made life, for many, tedious and boring, and further fueled their desire to leave. "The only real sport [in the rural South was] the opportunity to wave at the passing trains that rolled swiftly by," Blanche Beatty, who grew up in Florida, remarked. Growing numbers of Black social reformers worried that the absence of wholesome amusements for Black youth led many to seek out "immoral" pleasures and was a chief cause of juvenile crime and delinquency.[18]

News media and word of mouth painted a much rosier recreational picture of the urban North. The *Chicago Defender*, the nation's leading Black newspaper in the early 1900s, led the effort. Distributed below the Mason-Dixon line by African American railroad porters and travelers, the *Defender* castigated the white South and counterposed the region's endemic violence and repression to the North's supposed idyllic environs, urging its Black southern readers to give up on the South and migrate north. Many articles in the paper emphasized the recreational opportunities that awaited. A 1917 article in the *Defender* touted playgrounds "with all the modern equipment[,]"[19] while a 1919 series of articles on "Recreation in New York" encouraged readers to "take advantage of the many place [sic] of education, recreation and amusement" like parks, tennis courts, and other sites that were purportedly available to Blacks throughout the city.[20] White southerners took notice. A white newspaper in Athens, Georgia reportedly held that because the *Defender* maintained that southern African Americans could enjoy "places of public amusement" on an "equal basis with white people" it "had agitated" Blacks "to leave the South."[21]

African Americans had been leaving the South from the moment they became free—and striving to escape long before then, as well. In the 1880s, the "exoduster" movement led to the formation of dozens of Black towns on the Great Plains. By the 1890s, separate Black enclaves consisting of southern migrants had formed in northern cities such as Philadelphia and New York. But this steady trickle became a flood of Black out-migration beginning in the 1910s. Between 1910 and 1970, an estimated 6.5 million African Americans left the South for opportunities in the North and Western United States. The routes many African Americans took were often circuitous and arduous. Many moved first from small Southern communities to larger Southern towns before arriving in urban centers in the North and West.[22] The African American writer Richard Wright moved first from rural Mississippi, to Memphis, Tennessee, before settling in Chicago in 1927.

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[17] "Camp Washington Carver: Clifftop, WV," *New River Gorge* (blog), accessed January 21, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/neri/planyourvisit/camp-washington-carver-clifftop-wv.htm.
[18] Pilz, "The Beginnings of Organized Play for Black America," 61.
[19] James R. Grossman, "Blowing the Trumpet: The 'Chicago Defender' and Black Migration during World War I," *Illinois Historical Journal* 78, no. 2 (1985): 86–88, 91–92, 94.
[20] "Recreation in New York," *The Chicago Defender,* April 19, 1919; Charles T. Magill, "Recreation 11, Bear Mountain," *The Chicago Defender,* May 3, 1919; "Recreation No. 111, Protest Park," *The Chicago Defender*, May 10, 1919; Charles T. Magill, "Recreation No. 4," *The Chicago Defender,* May 17, 1919.
[21] "Read This, Then Laugh," *The Chicago Defender,* September 15, 1917.
[22] Brian McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope: Nature and the Great Migration in Chicago* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 1–4.

Writing in his autobiography *Black Boy*, Wright expressed a hope in the new landscape echoed by countless other migrants. "I headed North, full of a hazy notion that life could be lived with dignity, that the personalities of others could not be violated, that men should be able to confront other men without fear or shame[.]"[23]

While not the driving factor behind the out-migration of millions of Black Southerners in the 1910s, the prospect of freely enjoying recreation spaces undoubtedly informed many African Americans' decision to leave. Writing in 1924, sociologist George E. Haynes remarked that "Negroes believe that the Negro community in the North, although considerably segregated, has advantages over their former homes in the South, such as theatres, public libraries, parks, playgrounds, museums, and no "Jim-Crow" rail-road and street cars."[24]

Figure 2: *Jackson Playground, ca. 1930.* Black youth in Chicago playing at the playground which would later become Madden Park. Courtesy of the Chicago Park District Special Collections, Chicago Public Library.

Upon arriving in northern cities, many Black migrants sought to reconstitute the customs, cultural practices, and folkways of the places they left behind. Richard Wright remarked that he "could never really leave the South," and that he brought "a part of the South to transplant in alien soil."[25] Often, that process of reconstituting and reimagining Black culture and community in northern urban environments took place within urban parks and outdoor spaces. Black southern migrants to northern cities turned to green spaces to escape crowded housing and other

[23] Richard Wright, *Black Boy* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1947), 228.
[24] Pilz, "The Beginnings of Organized Play for Black America," 61.
[25] Wright, *Black Boy*, 228.

ills of modern urban life. The time outdoors inversely helped Black newcomers to remain connected to their cultures and maintain a collective memory to pass to subsequent generations. Playwright Lorraine Hansberry recounted the restorative experience of excursions to Washington Park (Local Park), on Chicago's South Side, with her Mississippi and Tennessee-born parents. It was during those trips to the park, she noted, that "the grownups were invariably reminded of having been children in the South and told the best stories."[26]

Figure 3: A group of African American youth engaging in a neighborhood clean-up at a "colored" settlement house in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Date Unknown. Courtesy of Temple University Special Collections Research Center.

The Progressive Movement (for Whites Only)

Contrary to the depictions on the pages of the *Defender,* the recreational landscape Black migrants encountered in cities like Chicago was no Eden. Groups of European immigrants and white Americans claimed urban parks and waterfronts as their own "turf" and fought to keep Black populations out. Privately run social and recreational agencies, likewise, barred Blacks from membership or use of its services.

By the late 1800s, a growing number of social reformers were sounding the alarm over the corrosive effects on rapid industrialization, ruthless capitalism, and unplanned urban growth on society, in particular, its children, who became the focus of several interrelated campaigns for

[26] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope*, 153.

reform that constituted the era's progressive movement. While some progressive reformers worked to expose public corruption and corporate malfeasance and implement political reforms, others focused their energies on improving conditions and outlooks among the impoverished and alienated immigrants crowded into urban slums. Reformers called for states to establish compulsory education and juvenile court systems. They also pushed to create and expand parks and play spaces in immigrant enclaves as a means to counter what they believed to be the immoral effects of city life and influence the values and culture of immigrant children. Reformers simultaneously developed new urban recreational landscapes and created opportunities for urban residents to briefly escape the melancholy of the city.

As late as 1890, it is estimated that there existed only one public playground in the United States.[27] Children instead played in the streets, open lots, or as muckraking journalist Jacob Riis discovered in New York City in the early 1890s, quietly in the basement of the local school. The conditions in turn-of-the-century urban immigrant neighborhoods spawned the settlement house movement. Founded by educated, white middle-class women, settlement houses provided critical social services like healthcare, entertainment, education, and training for newly arrived immigrants to cities, and became a political advocate for the needs of immigrant populations.[28] Seeking to counteract what Progressive reformers saw as the negative influences of urban life on impressionable immigrants, especially immigrant youth, settlement houses established robust recreational programs aimed at families and children.[29] Chicago's Hull-House, founded by Jane Addams in 1889, was at the forefront of this national movement for immigrant acculturation and advocacy. In 1894, Addams opened a playground on the grounds. With swings, a maypole, paving blocks and sandpile, it appealed to a wider group of children than earlier playground iterations in cities like Boston and became a model for other facilities.[30] By the early 1900s, more than 400 settlement houses dotted cities like Chicago, Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia, all of which sought to provide healthy recreational activities for its targeted populations.[31]

Settlement houses not only expanded recreational options, it also contributed to the standardization of recreational services and professionalization of recreational providers. Many early urban play places, including those at settlements and city parks, featured professional supervisors who coordinated children's play. Addams believed children had an "insatiable desire for play" that could be harnessed and used in constructive ways. She and other reformers believed without adult supervision the transformative opportunity presented by recreation would be lost.[32] Several reformers, including Addams, met in 1906, to form the Playground Association of America and elected Riis to an honorary office. The group consulted for communities and

[27] Sarah Jo Patterson, "Voting for Play: The Democratic Potential of Progressive Era Playgrounds," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 3, no. 2 (2004): 145–75.
[28] Benjamin McArthur, "The Chicago Playground Movement: A Neglected Feature of Social Justice," *Social Service Review* 49, no. 3 (1975): 376–95.
[29] Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, 2nd Edition (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 143.
[30] McArthur, "The Chicago Playground Movement," 379.
[31] Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State,* 143.
[32] Amanda Suzanne Hardin, "Summer Camp's Color Line: Racialized Landscapes and the Struggle for Integration, 1890–1950" (Master's thesis, Montana State University, 2017), 48.

organizations desiring to develop playgrounds and provided resources and training for recreational leaders. Reformers' push for play yielded significant results. In 1917, one report showed 481 communities with nearly 4,000 playgrounds.[33]

Playgrounds joined a number of supervised outdoor recreational youth efforts and initiatives in the Progressive Era. Among them were camp excursions. Reformers turned to summer camps to develop character among children and counteract the baleful influences of modern urban life. Many early camps in the 1880s were "simple outings," as one historian described them, "like three-day picnics." In the decades that followed, camping programs became more formalized, with organizations acquiring and designating spaces as campgrounds.[34] At the behest of an upstate New York branch of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), in 1885 Sumner Dudley accompanied several boys to a nearby lake inaugurating both Camp Dudley (Camp Dudley Road Historic District, NRHP, 1993) (Campground), one of the nation's first youth camps. Dudley's later insistence would encourage the organization to expand its foray into camping.[35] As reformers' concerns grew in the late 1800s and early 1900s, so did the proliferation of camps. By 1924, there were over 700 private campgrounds and more than 500 organizational camps in the U.S.[36] In the urban North, the Fresh Air Fund, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), plus various outdoor youth development groups like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, joined the YMCA in embracing the corrective powers of the great outdoors far from the hustle and bustle of city life.

The Fresh Air Fund began providing select city children time away from the city in 1877, a few years before Camp Dudley. Willard Parsons, a minister in rural Pennsylvania, encouraged his congregation to provide two-week country vacations for needy children from New York City. The program grew quickly. Its leadership, consisting of middle-class and wealthy white men and women, carefully selected white Protestant children from crowded tenements to pair with families of similar backgrounds in rural New England. As interest grew, the organization established camps to serve those children who proved difficult to match. By 1913, there were 10 camps scattered across New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The fund's work in New York would inspire similar endeavors in other American cities like Chicago and Boston.[37]

Other Progressive Era groups were more far-ranging in their efforts than the Fresh Air Fund. The YMCA's early attempts at camping propelled the organization to become a strong proponent of boys camping in later years. However, in addition to camping, independent branches of the YMCA and YWCA, a similar organization with an expressed focus on women, created other play and recreational opportunities for urban children and adults. Associations constructed buildings to meet the various needs of their neighborhoods. Many branches served as meeting

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[33] McArthur, "The Chicago Playground Movement," 377.
[34] David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 234–242.
[35] Hardin, "Summer Camp's Color Line," 11; Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy*, 234. Camp Dudley moved to its location on the shores of Lake Champlain in upstate New York the early 1900s and continues to operate.
[36] Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy*, 237.
[37] Julia Guarneri, "Changing Strategies for Child Welfare, Enduring Beliefs about Childhood: The Fresh Air Fund, 1877–1926," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 11, no. 1 (2012): 27–70.

places, provided religious services, social services, education and training, and theater and entertainment. They also joined settlements in adding playgrounds and various branches developed gymnasiums, constructed pools, and fielded sports teams, like baseball and basketball, as sports and recreation entered the American mainstream and became connected to changing ideas about faith, masculinity and health.[38]

Perhaps the most ubiquitous children's reform efforts were the innumerable outdoor youth development organizations that proliferated in the early 1900s. The Woodcraft Indians, Sons of Daniel Boone, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Girl Scouts, and other organizations competed to leverage outdoor recreation to influence Americans' childhoods.[39] The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts outpaced competing groups and emerged as the leading groups for young girls and boys by the 1920s.[40] The Boy Scouts provided nature-based programming to pattern boys in masculine traits and behaviors that fit rapidly modernizing American society. Through camping, swimming, hiking, calisthenics, group games, and other activities, boys twelve to fifteen-years old learned ideas about manhood that had been reconfigured to meet broad economic, social, and political changes like the expanded role of women in society, growing presences of ethnic and racial minorities, and corporatization of men's labor.[41]

The Girl Scouts, founded in 1912, two years after the Boy Scouts, adopted many of the Boy Scouts' guiding laws and outdoor activities.[42] A troop in Connecticut reported, "During the summer of 1918 we went on several hikes to the woods where we made fires and cooked our supper […] the U.S. Coast Guard entertained us by giving an exhibition of their life saving drill. Afterwards we went swimming with some of the crew who demonstrated various strokes." However, the girls' organization conceived camping, hiking, "skipping, rowing, fencing," and other activities to prepare young girls for a society in which women were loosed from traditional domesticity.[43] Though girls received domestic instruction they also were encouraged to lead, be strong and self-reliant, and pursue education and professional employment, ideals which subverted prevailing gender norms.[44] The two groups' positions enabled them to grow into sizable, nation-wide organizations. The Girl Scouts recorded more than 50,000 members in 1920.[45] Records show nearly 10 times as many Boy Scouts, 481,084, in 1918.[46]

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[38] Mary Frederickson, "Citizens for Democracy: The Industrial Programs of the YWCA," in *Sisterhood and Solidarity: Workers' Education for Women, 1914-1984*, eds. Mary Frederickson and Joyce L. Kornbluh, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 85; Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories*: *YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 112; Patterson, "Voting for Play," 150.

[39] Benjamin René Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America: Citizenship, Race, and the Environment, 1910-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 17, 26, 27.

[40] Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America,* 10; Mary Aickin Rothschild, "To Scout or to Guide? The Girl Scout-Boy Scout Controversy, 1912–1941," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 6, no. 3 (1981): 116.

[41] Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of Americ*a, 4–5, 41*,* 48, 57, 60.

[42] Susan A. Miller, *Growing Girls: The Natural Origins of Girls' Organizations in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 30.

[43] Rebekah E. Revzin, "American Girlhood in the Early Twentieth Century: The Ideology of Girl Scout Literature, 1913–1930," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 68, no. 3 (1998): 269.

[44] Revzin, "American Girlhood in the Early Twentieth Century," 270–271.

[45] Rothschild, "To Scout or to Guide?," 116.

[46] Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America*, 40.

But in collapsing class and cultural differences among whites and European immigrants, progressive reformers also accentuated racial distinctions and divisions. While immigrants could turn to a number of groups, organizations, and urban spaces for recreation, and in the process became more integrated into American culture and society, the same opportunities were not available to urban African Americans. Rather than extend to urban Black populations the same compassion and sympathy they provided Polish, Italian, Irish, and other European ethnic groups, white liberals and progressive reformers embraced racist theories of Black criminality prevalent at the time and systematically excluded Black communities from its programs and services. A driving force in the improvement of social conditions among urban immigrant populations, settlement houses ignored the needs of Black migrants. One social science researcher found segregated or white-only "recreational centers, settlement or community centers," in 35 of 40 cities surveyed in the urban North in the late 1920s. The same study noted Detroit's Sophie B. Wright Settlement had one day a week devoted "to Negro clubs" and the Western Community House and College Settlement in Philadelphia segregated Black residents into special clubs and classes.[47] In Chicago, Jane Addams's Hull House touted that it practiced "interracial good will" but nevertheless maintained segregated activities.[48] Addams herself was inconsistent in her attention to and advocacy for African Americans. She provided some material support to antiracist campaigns and activists. Yet, she limited her continued calls for public recreation, which she considered a solution for "the number of arrests among juvenile delinquents," to white and immigrant youth.[49] The same social and environmental conditions that led progressive reformers to take action to improve the lives and outlooks of immigrant populations were, when seen in Black urban populations, chalked up as racial traits seemingly immune to intervention. The result in this and other northern cities was a progressive transformation of urban recreational landscapes, but one that was for whites only. "All other races in the city are welcomed into the settlements, YMCA's, YWCA's, gymnasiums and every other movement for uplift," the crusading journalist and progressive activist Ida B. Wells acidly remarked, "if only their skins are white[.]"[50]

The racist stereotypes that led cities and private agencies to neglect the recreational needs of urban Black populations also led them to concentrate vice in Black neighborhoods, further stigmatizing Black communities and providing the rationale for Black criminalization. S. Waters McGill, a YMCA official in Nashville, Tennessee, captured the vicious cycle that urban recreational deprivation and vice concentration in Black neighborhoods had set in motion:

> Plenty of room for dives and dens,
> Glitter and glare and sin;
> Plenty of room for prison pens,
> Gather the criminals in;
> Plenty of room for jails and courts—
> Willing enough to pay;

[47] Washington, "Recreational Facilities for the Negro," 275–276.
[48] Khalil G. Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Ideas about Race and Crime in the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 125.
[49] Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 124.
[50] Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 131.

> But never a place for lads to race,
> No never a place to play.
> Plenty of room for shops and stores,
> Mammon must have the best;
> Plenty of room for the running sores
> That rot in the city's breast;
> Plenty of room for the lures that lead
> The hearts of our youth astray;
> But never a cent on a playground spent,
> No never a place to play.[51]

Left to fend for themselves, African Americans encountered a number of stumbling blocks in establishing their own settlements. Black reformers often lacked proximity to potential benefactors and sometimes found white philanthropists' goals counter to their own. Ida B. Wells walked away from Chicago's Frederick Douglass Center, a settlement she co-founded, after repeatedly clashing with its director and white benefactors over the organization's leadership and focus.[52]

Even as they remained reliant on white philanthropy, Black progressive reformers pushed for institutional autonomy. In Chicago, Black community leaders partnered with officials in the Chicago YMCA's main (and whites only) branch to establish a Black branch of the organization, leading to the opening of the Wabash Avenue YMCA (Wabash Avenue YMCA, NRHP, 1986) in 1913.[53] The branch joined a growing body of Black YMCAs across the country that formed their own semi-autonomous body. Chicago's Wabash Avenue YMCA and Indiana Avenue YWCA, established to serve the city's Black residents, endeavored to match the recreational support of similar white organizations. The Wabash Y started a successful summer camp in Michigan and the Indiana YWCA developed a short-lived camp in northwest Indiana.[54] Despite their best efforts, Black Ys, like Black settlement houses, were frequently under-resourced and underfunded. A 1928 study found that many YMCAs and YWCAs lacked "gymnasiums and swimming-pools" and adequate physical equipment.[55]

The playground movement, likewise, overlooked the needs of Black youth. It was not until 1919, thirteen years after the founding of the Playground Association of America, that the organization began to consider the play needs of African American communities. The group's Bureau of Colored Work followed a similar model as the larger organization and provided project consultation, developed cultural programs, and trained Black recreation and play leaders. But

[51] Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 128.
[52] Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 132.
[53] Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 332. Wabash Avenue YMCA closed in the late 1970s but was preserved with the help of several area churches in the 1990s.
[54] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 89–92.
[55] McGuinn, "Recreation," 246.

while playground professionals dispensed advice to Black communities, it provided little in the way of direct support, and failed to mount any challenges to local segregationist practices.[56]

The exclusion of African Americans from Progressive Era social reforms extended beyond the city limits. Most summer camps barred participation by Black youth or ran separate camps for Blacks at the beginning or end of the summer season, when it was often too cold to fully enjoy the outdoor experience. The largest camp for children in Michigan, owned by one of Detroit's newspapers, barred Black children. Similarly, the Christian Association of Camps of Detroit offered Black children only a few weeks at the beginning and end of each season.[57] For white youth, the exclusive nature of summer camps created a racial homogeneity that campers and their families could not achieve in ethnically and racially diversifying cities.[58] White campers often experienced and performed activities that furthered harmful racial stereotypes like minstrel shows.[59]

In the face of racism and exclusion, many African American organizations worked to provide alternate means for urban Black youth to enjoy nature. Black institutions, including churches, the YMCA and YWCA, and groups like the Urban League, developed their own summer camps. These camps aimed to serve a variety of functions, including acculturing southern newcomers to life in the North, cultivating talented race leaders, developing character and healthy bodies, and providing Black youth relief from the "overt racism" and environmental conditions of urban life.[60] Campers hiked, swam, fished, played games and sports like baseball, tennis, and volleyball, and participated in other activities.[61]

Nestled along the shores of Lake Lashaway near East Brookfield, Massachusetts, Camp Atwater (Camp Atwater, NHL, 1982) (Campground) was the first camp to be owned and operated by African Americans. In 1921, the daughter of a local white doctor gifted the family's former vacation property, over 50 acres, to a Black church and the local Urban League. Originally conceived to reform southern transplants, the camp quickly began catering to more affluent African Americans. Within years of its opening, Camp Atwater was hosting the children of Black America's "talented tenth," including W. E. B. Du Bois's daughter Yolande.[62] The camp flourished and in 1939 its leadership boasted, "the Camp is now quite generally regarded as the best equipped as well as the best managed Negro camp in the country."[63] Places like Washington, DC's Camp Pleasant (Campground), organized with the assistance of Associated Charities, annually provided summer camps for hundreds of underprivileged Black women and

[56] Pilz, *The Beginnings of Negro Play for Black America*, 60, 67; James Frederick Murphy, "Egalitarianism and Separatism: A History of Approaches in the Provision of Public Recreation and Leisure Service for Blacks, 1906–1972" (PhD diss., Oregon State University, 1972), 154.
[57] Washington, "Deluxe Summer Camp for Colored Children," 303.
[58] Hardin, "Summer Camp's Color Line," 44–45.
[59] Hardin, "Summer Camp's Color Line," 51.
[60] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope*, 67.
[61] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope* 67, 90–97.
[62] Hardin, "Summer Camp's Color Line," 21–23, 55, 59, 103. In operation today, Camp Atwater is the nation's oldest camp serving Black youth. Today the camp sits on 75 acres and includes 40 buildings and a 3-acre island off the shore.
[63] Hardin, "Summer Camp's Color Line," 25.

children in the 1920s.[64] The camp's Black leadership conceived the camp's highly-regimented schedule, "fresh air, abundant good food, and freedom from present cares and duties" to inculcate campers with middle-class "habits" and values.[65]

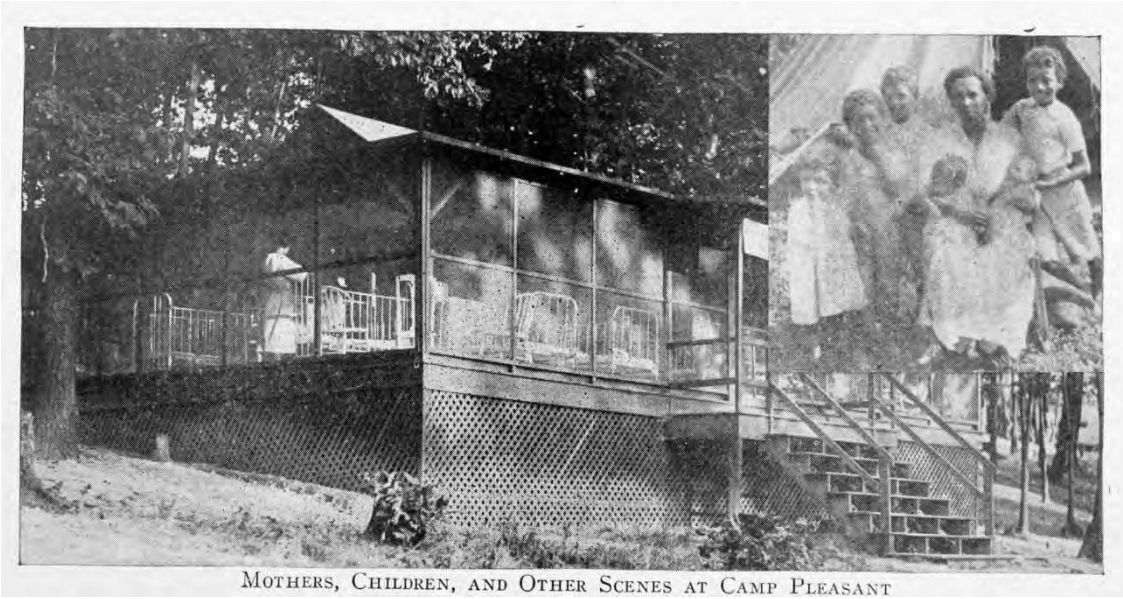

Figure 4: Mothers and Children at Camp Pleasant. 1927. Photographed by Addison Scurlock and Scurlock Studio. Published by Howard University Press. Courtesy of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division, New York Public Library Digital Collections.

Yet not all Black camps enjoyed such success. In many cases, material circumstances constrained Black-owned and operated camps. Camp Hammond (Campground), operated by Chicago's Indiana Avenue YWCA, depended upon the generosity of industrial corporations but eventually closed in the 1920s due to costs and environmental concerns. Though Black-owned camps were a source of pride for African American communities, they often struggled with limited resources to meet all of the community's needs. And yet, partnering with white institutions and organizations on separate Black camps and youth activities came with its own costs. Black churches, schools, civic organizations, and other groups enthusiastically sponsored African American Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops in the face of opposition from organizational leadership. Many northern Black Girl Scout troops chartered in the 1920s were not recognized

[64] William Henry Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, D.C.: A Sociological Analysis of the Negro in an Urban Environment* (Westport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1927), 47–48. In 1937, Camp Pleasant, which had moved several times since its establishment in 1906, relocated to the Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area (RDA), managed by the National Park Service, in northern Virginia. The camp remained at Chopawamsic RDA until 1942 when it was forced to relocate again. In 1948, Chopawamsic RDA was renamed Prince William Forest Park. Chopawamsic RDA provided two camps for African American campers (Camp 1 for boys, Camp 2 for girls) and three camps for white campers (Camps 2, 3, and 5). The site had separate entrances for the white and Black camps and designed the area in the way to restrict circulation and interaction between the white and Black campers. Camp Cabin 4, which hosted the Black campers, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Pleasant Historic District, Chopawamsic RDA Camp 4, NRHP, 1989). See also https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/item/va2194/.

[65] Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, D.C*, 48.

by white regional councils until the 1930s.[66] The racial discrimination Black Girl Scout troop organizers encountered in the North paralleled attempts at organizing Black troops in the South. It was not until 1932 that Maggie Lena Walker, a pioneering Black businesswoman in Richmond, Virginia, chartered the South's first Black Girl Scout troop.[67]

Even when recognized, Black scouts found some scouting behavior, performance, and materials riddled with dehumanizing racist stereotypes. Early Boy Scouts literature often used Black males as foils and negative examples in lessons on proper behavior and conduct.[68] The group, too, typecast Black men as backwards and rural and parodied Black males in jokes, sketches, poems, stories, speeches, songs, and minstrel shows.[69] Even the organization's reasons for authorizing Black scouting troops was dubious. The national organization justified the creation of Black scout troops on the basis that it would refashion supposedly wayward, lazy, and mercurial Black boys into loyal, efficient laborers.[70]

Once formed, Black Boy Scout troops encountered further discrimination. Boy Scout officials subjected Black troop leaders to additional training.[71] Material conditions and racial discrimination circumscribed opportunities for Black boys and girls to lead, advance, and experience nature in the same way as white youth, relegating Black troops to "second class scouting."[72] Little wonder, then, that Black participation in boys and girls scouts during these years remained low. A 1928 study found the "extent" of African American Girl Scouts to be "so small as to be of little importance." Similarly, it determined the reach of African American Boy Scouts as "limited." Chicago tallied 680 boys in its "colored division of Scouts." Elsewhere, Buffalo, New York, reported only "two troops of forty" African American "boys each" and in Dayton, Ohio, there were only 40 boys in the Black YMCA's troop.[73]

The racist stereotypes and exclusionary practices of progressive reformers were far from the only factor shaping and constraining African Americans' relationship with outdoor recreational spaces and environments in the urban North. Black newcomers' recreation and leisure pursuits were also tempered by the actions of fellow Blacks. No sooner had southern Black migrants arrived in northern cities, cultural and class tensions and divisions with settled African Americans in the urban North quickly emerged. Fearful that the mass influx of southern migrants threatened their own tenuous place in northern cities, Black Northerners scrutinized and sought to shape and police the conduct of migrants. Throughout the first Great Migration (1915–1930), the *Chicago*

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[66] Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America,* 200–203*;* Revzin, "American Girlhood in the Early Twentieth Century," 265.
Revzin, "American Girlhood in the Early Twentieth Century," 265.
[67] Erin Blakemore, "Girl Scouting Was Once Segregated," *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 21, 2017, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/girl-scouting-was-once-segregated-180962208/. Walker's home in Richmond is a National Historic Landmark (Maggie Lena Walker House, NHL, 1975).
[68] Mischa Honeck, "A Brother to All?: Scouting and the Problem of Race," in *Our Frontier Is the World*, *The Boy Scouts in the Age of American Ascendancy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 134; Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America,* 197.
[69] Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America,* 197–198.
[70] Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America,* 201, 204.
[71] Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America,* 205–207.
[72] Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America,* 208.
[73] McGuinn, "Recreation," in *Negro Problems in Cities*, 248–249.

Defender regularly published lists of "do's and don'ts" for new residents. One list, published in 1918, urged Black Chicagoans not to "hang out the windows" or "appear on the street with old dust caps," or "dirty aprons."[74] Some social service organizations also distributed literature to new migrants. In 1919, the Chicago Urban League handed newcomers a brochure on cleanliness. The Urban League, *Defender*, YMCA, aldermen, and other Black organizations in the city also held events intended to mold southern migrants' behavior. The groups touted clean up, grass seeding, tin can pick up, and health weeks or days in 1918 and 1919.[75] Even baptisms, a southern faith practice that dated back centuries, was not beyond censure. After a South Side congregation used a beach along Lake Michigan for the important tradition, the *Defender* derided the pastor for the "primitive form of religious conduct" and insisted that other "Churches of Chicago have never disgraced themselves by staging a Sunday circus on the lake front."[76] Migrants also faced pressures to conform in order to counter whites' prejudices much closer to home. Shortly after Ida Mae Brandon Gladney arrived in Chicago in 1938 from rural Mississippi, a neighbor visited and encouraged her to not wear her headscarf in public, hang her wet laundry out the window, or allow her children outside the home without shoes.[77]

Clashes over culture and class among African Americans during the Great Migration extended to outdoor leisure and recreation. In many Northern cities, racially discriminatory housing policies and low-wage jobs delimited African American working-class residents to poor and segregated neighborhoods with little private green space. That, coupled with the drudgery and monotony of industrial labor and humiliations and outrages suffered at the hands of white bosses, made finding time and space for pleasure and enjoyment all the more imperative for the urban North's emerging Black proletariat. Many working-class African Americans retreated to public beaches and parks to relax, play, and socialize. In Chicago, Black migrants flocked to Washington Park (Washington Park, NRHP, 1992), a 371-acre park designed by Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux. Designed to meld "the fresh and healthy nature of the North with the restful, dreamy nature of the South," the park featured a pastoral landscape that included a lagoon, large meadow, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and tree-lined pathways.[78] Black residents from the surrounding neighborhoods engaged in a variety of activities in the park, many of which were reminiscent of pursuits popular in the South. They picnicked, fished, boated, and in the winter months skated on the frozen lagoon.[79] African American migrants also played sports in the park, including cricket, tennis, and baseball.[80]

Though fishing and boating may have escaped the harsh judgement of more settled and elite Black residents, working-class Black migrants playing tennis and baseball often did draw their ire. The newcomers "forged hybrid leisure cultures" that brought performances and attire not uncommon in the South to the northern environment which occasionally angered and

[74] Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 291.
[75] William M. Tuttle, "Contested Neighborhoods and Racial Violence: Prelude to the Chicago Riot of 1919," *Journal of Negro History* 55, no. 4 (1970): 274.
[76] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope*, 46.
[77] Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns,* 286.
[78] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope*, 17, 25–28.
[79] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 20, 28.
[80] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 20, 26.

"embarrassed" the old timers. The *Defender* disparaged working-class African Americans who played tennis without shirts and scoffed at those who came to the tennis courts "directly from work" and played matches in their work clothes. The paper, too, bemoaned African Americans who sang, danced, and played instruments near the tennis courts. The *Defender* insisted that "tennis is strictly a gentleman's game" not to be debased by poor behavior and improper attire.[81] Chicago's Black professionals also chided working-class African Americans for their conduct during baseball, a popular sport in the South at the time. Heated arguments and fights in a baseball league organized by African American churches on the South Side also led Black elites to admonish the events in the *Defender* on multiple occasions in the 1920s. According to the paper, the behavior was "humiliating to both Colored and white fans."[82]

Like their white counterparts, middle-class and elite African American reformers believed in the palliative effects of play and recreation for the working class. However, Black reformers were wary when any activity could confirm white residents' racist stereotypes of Black Americans. An article in the *Defender* noted, "at all times … we are being watched closely by those who are quick to see our faults and magnify them." Therefore, during the first few decades of the 1900s, Chicago's elite Black residents attempted to moderate behavior in Washington Park due to its proximity to working-class and middle-class white families in neighborhoods which surrounded much of the park.[83] Eventually intense migration and discriminatory housing practices swelled Black communities and sent scores of Black Chicagoans into white communities near the park in search of improved housing. Only after the neighborhoods surrounding Washington Park completed their racial transition from white to Black in the early 1930s, and white usage of the park subsided, did the cultural elite's criticisms of Black working-class sporting behavior cease.[84]

Middle-class and elite African Americans' anxieties over working-class African Americans was not limited to their leisure and recreational activities in public spaces. In the 1930s, they were also critical of Black working-class radical politics, which was being fomented in public spaces like Washington Park. Following mass unemployment and homelessness engendered by the Great Depression, some of the Black working class in Chicago engaged Communist Party organizers in Washington Park due to the party's attention to the exigencies of the working class.[85] The Black cultural elite subsequently attempted to use the same park space to subvert that radical political expression and reinforce their cultural and political power. They developed a parade that terminated in the park and a corresponding picnic in the same space.[86] They further implemented recreational programming for children and young adults that included baseball, softball, bird-house construction, and even sandcastle building.[87]

[81] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 45.
[82] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 47.
[83] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 48–49.
[84] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 115.
[85] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 108–110, 117–127
[86] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 105–106.
[87] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 140.

Figure 5: Vacationers rowing on a lake at Idlewild, ca. 1930.
Courtesy of the Stanley Kufta Collection, Archives of Michigan.

Spaces for a Rising Race

During the Great Migration, a new Black business class took shape in northern cities. While many of them earned their living from the dollars and cents of working-class Blacks, this emergent Black bourgeoisie exhibited no desire to spend their leisure time with the masses. As the Black professional class of northern cities grew, so too did the numbers of Black summer resorts and rural retreats in the North. In 1908, West Michigan Resort (Resort, lake) opened near Benton Harbor, Michigan. The property, popular among Black Chicagoans before and during World War I, comprised nearly a dozen acres including several hundred feet of Lake Michigan beachfront replete with cottages and tents.[88] When the resort shuttered in 1915, another Michigan community, Idlewild (Idlewild Historic District, NRHP, 2010) (Resort, lake), in rural northwest Michigan, developed to cater to Black Chicagoans. That year, four white developers platted 2,700 acres of cutover land along a lake and began advertising lot sales in regional and national editions of major Black newspapers. Within ten years, more than 4,000 lots had been sold and 400 cottages constructed, many belonging to the upper strata of the Black Metropolis.[89] Prominent Black Chicagoans such as real estate magnate Jesse Binga and *Chicago Defender* founder Robert Abbott purchased cabins at Idlewild. Activist and intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois and Madame C. J. Walker, a pioneer in Black women's hair care products and the first African American woman millionaire, also frequented Idlewild during its formative years.[90] There, vacationing families enjoyed a variety of activities from swimming, boating, and fishing, to hiking, horseback riding, and dance, and live performances.[91] Their retreat to the outdoors for leisure subverted racist stereotypes, which framed African Americans as primitive and

[88] Colin Fisher, "African Americans, Outdoor Recreation, and the 1919 Chicago Race Riot," in "*To Love the Wind and the Rain": African Americans and Environmental History*, eds. Dianne Glave and Mark Stoll (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 70; "Vacation Days," *The Crisis* 4, no. 4 (1912): 187.
[89] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 69–71.
[90] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 64*,* 65, 75.
[91] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 80–82.

uncivilized, and melded the principles of the country's foremost Black intellectuals who championed conversely an elite vanguard and self-help.[92]

Though Idlewild emerged as one of the nation's largest and most celebrated Black resort communities, a number of similar resorts emerged to cater to a growing group of African American visitors. In Colorado's Rocky Mountains, a group of Black businessmen acquired and developed 100 acres north of Denver into Lincoln Hills (Resort, mountain), the region's only Black resort community, beginning in 1922. In 1927, the YWCA developed a portion of the site into a campground for Black youth, and in 1928, Obrey Wendall "Winks" Hamlet, a homeowner in Lincoln Hills, opened Winks Panorama (Winks Panorama, NRHP, 1980) (Resort, mountain).[93] The full-service lodge catered to Black men and women eager to enjoy the cool mountain air.

In southern Wisconsin, Black Chicagoans established an 83-acre lake resort community on Lake Ivanhoe (Resort, lake) in 1926. The developers named streets after famous African Americans in history, constructed one of the largest pavilions in the state, and on opening day treated visitors to a performance from Cab Calloway and his band.[94] The following year, the Fox Lake community (Fox Lake, NRHP, 2001) (Resort, lake) in far northeastern Indiana, began with a much less auspicious start when prominent Black families from Indianapolis and northwestern Indiana began to rent lake cabins from white landowners or construct cabins on property they had purchased on the lake.[95] Still another African American retreat emerged along the south shore of Lake Adney (Resort, lake), in central Minnesota, in the 1920s.[96]

The Great Depression slowed the pace of development at many Black retreats and seriously derailed others. Some, however, persevered thanks to federal programs established during the New Deal. In 1934, two Black professionals, a Black newspaper man and doctor, purchased 346 acres of land in the Missouri Ozarks for "a recreational center for colored people."[97] Unable to afford the construction of a dam on the property, they successfully sought federal support

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[92] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 21, 75.

[93] "History: A Story of Vision, Pride and Community," Lincoln Hills, http://www.historiclincolnhills.com/history/; "Winks Panorama Boundary Increase and Amendment," National Register of Historic Places Inventory Registration Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2014), Section 8. Integration and Hamlet's death in 1965 ushered in the end of Lincoln Hills as a primarily African American resort area. Today, Winks Lodge and portions of what was Lincoln Hills are privately owned.

[94] Samuel L. Gonzales, "A Black Community in Rural Wisconsin: A Historical Study of Lake Ivanhoe" (Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, 1972). Today, Lake Ivanhoe is largely integrated but retains a small viable African American community.

[95] Claudia Polley, "Fox Lake: A Resort Like Many Others," *Cultural Resource Management* 20, no. 2 (1997): 55; Glory-June Greiff, "Fox Lake, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001), Section 8. Fox Lake was the first African American resort community listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, The Fox Lake community is comprised of several dozen homes, most of which continue to be owned by African Americans.

[96] Maury Glover, "For a Nearly a Century, Minnesota's Lake Adney Has Been a Haven for Black Families," FOX 9 Minneapolis-St. Paul, September 8, 2019, https://www.fox9.com/news/for-a-nearly-a-century-minnesotas-lake-adney-has-been-a-haven-for-black-families. Today, only a small percentage of properties along Lake Adney's south shore remain in the hands of African Americans.

[97] Gary R. Kremer and Evan P. Orr, "Lake Placid: 'A Recreational Center for Colored People in the Missouri Ozarks,'" *Missouri Historical Review* 95, no. 1 (2000): 171, 172.

through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). After the WPA completed the dam in the summer of 1937, Lake Placid (Resort, lake) began welcoming African Americans to its wooded shores.[98]

Because they were founded as places where an elite class of educated and culturally-refined African American families could find temporary relief from the confines of a racist society, resorts like Idlewild came to reflect the class and cultural backgrounds and outlooks of their privileged visitors. However, as a result of the Great Depression, working-class Black families from midwestern cities fled to communities surrounding Idlewild in pursuit of jobs and lower cost of living. The influx frustrated wealthier Idlewilders and resulted in counter advertising to attract more desirable residents.[99] Often the forms of leisure working-class people took elicited concern. Du Bois, for example, despised vacationers who "unconsciously" projected "their city habits into the country" and sought "a nightlife and a recreation suitable only for city life." Expressing his frustrations at the constraints Jim Crow placed on Black vacationing options, he mused, "If I go among colored people, what kind of colored people are they going to be? Am I going to meet educated and well-bred folk, or am I going to run into gamblers and makers of eternal whoopee?"[100]

Even as they sought to enforce the class line in social settings, Black elites practiced forms of *noblesse oblige* aimed at bringing the benefits of nature to those less fortunate. They believed outdoor escapes would help mitigate the conditions brought by dangerous jobs, poor housing, and crowded communities. Thus, the Black elite in cities like Chicago and Detroit, often through the YWCA, YMCA, Boy Scouts, and similar organizations, established camps in rural Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin for the Black working classes.[101] As elite African Americans developed separate resorts and camps in the rural landscapes of the Midwest, they often returned to communities where the racial boundaries around outdoor recreation were much more contested.

The urban landscapes southern African American migrants encountered were far cries from the "Canaan" and "Promised Land" in the Black imaginary. In many northern cities, African Americans encountered under-resourced and unimproved recreational space. A women's camp in northwestern Indiana in the steel mill district was shuttered due to its "unsanitary and unhygienic" conditions in 1925.[102] Beachfront areas set aside for Black populations were often small, ill-equipped, hazardous, and in less than ideal locations. Black Chicagoans complained that the 31st Street Beach, one of the few that Blacks could use freely, was small, rocky, and perilously close to a rail line.[103] In Asbury Park, New Jersey, sewage spewed into the ocean near an African American beach in the late 1930s.[104] Even Black elite resorts were not ideally located

[98] Kremer and Orr, "Lake Placid," 173–77. Lake Placid remains a largely African American community and is frequented by family and descendants of the original homeowners.
[99] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 167–169.
[100] W. E. B. Du Bois, "'About Vacation'; Forum Fact and Opinion," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, September 18, 1937.
[101] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 86–87.
[102] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 91.
[103] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 39–40.
[104] "Beach Discrimination," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 12, 1939.

and often available simply because their use value no longer appealed to whites. The property that became Idlewild had previously been harvested for timber.[105]

African Americans' search for better living conditions in the North provoked violent white reactions, no more so than when it came to housing. In the first few decades of the twentieth century the enormous influx of Black men and women into cities swelled existing African American neighborhoods and placed tremendous pressure on available housing. Unscrupulous landlords took advantage of African Americans' limited options by subdividing units, disinvesting in properties, and charging exorbitant rents, which in Detroit were sometimes "20 to 40 percent more" than amounts demanded from white renters by the 1940s.[106] African Americans often attempted to mitigate their steep rents by taking in boarders, exacerbating already overcrowded and dire conditions. "Sometimes even the bathtub is used to sleep on, two individuals taking turns!" one African American educator observed in Harlem.[107] The crowded and deteriorating conditions in many of these spaces forced African Americans to seek better housing on the fringes of Black neighborhoods. They did so in the face of unrelenting violence from white immigrants. In Chicago alone, whites bombed 58 homes acquired by Black families in white neighborhoods between 1917 and 1921.[108]

Racial violence in residential areas often spilled over into recreational spaces, and vice versa. Instances of both grew in direct proportion to the broader competition between white immigrants and Black migrants over jobs, status, and opportunity in the urban industrial North. These tensions were especially pronounced in Chicago, the destination of the largest numbers of southern Black migrants, in the period following the end of World War I in 1918. Postwar demobilization, a lull in new housing construction during the war, and the return of white and Black veterans from the battlefields of Europe set off intense competition for jobs in the city's stockyards and industries and housing on the city's South Side. The city's parks and other outdoor public spaces became the site where these competing groups engaged in battle.[109] As described in the introduction of this study, the deadly assault on Black Chicago teenager Eugene Williams for accidentally swimming across an aqueous color line in July 1919 sparked one of the deadliest race riots in U.S. history. Unlike previous "riots," which could more accurately be described as pogroms in which whites wantonly assaulted and terrorized Black people unprovoked, on the shores of Lake Michigan and in the parks and on the streets of the city's South Side, Black Chicagoans fought back. Outnumbered and forced to fight both white civilians and white police, African Americans bore the brunt of the conflict. Twenty three of the thirty-

[105] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 83–84.
[106] Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 54.
[107] Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto, Negro New York, 1890-1930* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), 138–139.
[108] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 35–36.
[109] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 31; Murphy, "Egalitarianism and Separatism," 48; "Race Divisions on Public Beaches," Encyclopedia of Chicago, accessed September 7, 2020, https://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/300066.html.

eight persons killed were African American and the majority of the several hundred injured were also African American.[110]

Racial conflicts over public recreational space plagued Chicago and other northern cities throughout the Great Migration era. As early as 1913, white gangs attacked Blacks who sought access to parks that were frequented by whites. In Washington Park on Chicago's South Side, "There were fights there every Sunday."[111] White youth belonging to the city's numerous "athletic clubs" were often the ones instigating racial violence. In the years preceding and following the 1919 race riot, the historian Andrew J. Diamond notes, "the harassment of African Americans had become a competitive sport among athletic clubs, and nowhere was this sport engaged in more frequently and more enthusiastically than in the parks, beaches, and playgrounds around the edges of the Black Belt."[112] In 1925, a group of whites harassed and assaulted African Americans attempting to swim along the beachfront at Chicago's Jackson Park. The police officer who responded to the incident admonished the African Americans present to vacate the area, informing them that the "beach is for white people only." A group of white teenage boys, at the same beach in 1929, threw rocks at and threatened a Black Girl Scouts troop and their leaders. After several additional race-based incidents at the beach, in the early 1930s officials erected a fence that would divide the beach into Black and white areas until it was toppled in 1940.[113]

In Detroit, white and Black residents flocked to Belle Isle (Belle Isle, NRHP, 1974) (Local Park), an island park in the Detroit River where people fished, picnicked, boated, and played sports. As Detroit's Black population surged, white and Black residents mingled with occasional fights over things like outdoor grills and fishing spots. In June of 1943, white sailors attacked Black visitors to the park and separately white women beat a Black woman. Rumors about the attacks spread to Detroit's Black community and the violence escalated. When the riot finally quelled, 34 people had lost their lives, including 25 African Americans, and over 600 persons had been injured.[114]

Indeed, racial conflicts over recreational space became common in northern cities during the Great Migration, as were cities' attempts to mitigate conflict through segregation. This, in turn, only ratcheted up racial tensions, compounded unjust conditions, and fueled Black unrest. Philadelphia, for instance, attempted to prevent unrest by permitting the use of city swimming pools by whites and Blacks at different times. In early July 1941, a young Black bather was caught between the change from Black to white swimming periods and held underwater by white swimmers, almost drowning. The incident spread beyond the pool, into the surrounding community. Hundreds were involved and 30 injured before the riot dissipated.[115]

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[110] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope*, 32.
[111] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope,* 29–30.
[112] Andrew J. Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multicultural City, 1908–1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 19–20.
[113] Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle Over Segregated Recreation in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 28–29.
[114] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters,* 43. Attractions at Belle Isle have changed over the years however the park continues to be owned by Detroit.
[115] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters,* 40.

In addition to violence, white northerners attempted to prevent Black use of certain recreational spaces and maintain de facto segregation in other ways. Some recreational spaces permitted Black residents to attend only on specific days of the week or during specific moments in the season. In the 1930s, the Forest Preserves outside of Chicago barred African Americans from some pools completely and refused "to permit the use of swimming pools and beaches to white and colored people at the same time."[116] In other places, white officials were even more devious. Some white institutions created ostensibly private institutions and adopted "members only" signs to exclude African Americans.[117] Others attempted to diffuse usage with arbitrary identification or regulation requirements. When two large pools opened at Pittsburgh's Highland Park in 1931, white officials requested Black swimmers produce their "health certificates" and declined to ask the same of white swimmers.[118] In 1938, an ordinance in Long Branch, New Jersey forced beachgoers to wear badges that authorized them to use certain portions of the previously segregated beach.[119] White northerners often pointed to cities' crowded conditions and supposed racial violence in their efforts to delimit Black recreational outlets.

In their magisterial study of mid-twentieth century urban Black life, *Black Metropolis,* sociologists St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton noted that the recreational activities of Black Chicagoans—what, in their words, "Bronzeville consider[ed] a good time"—was "intimately connected with economic status, education, and social standing." Despite these differences, the recreational pursuits of Black Americans in Great Migration-era cities reflected a common desire to transcend the color line and to live free, if only for a weekend in a rural setting or summer afternoon in a city park. As public outdoor spaces in the North turned into sites of conflict, forcing African Americans to confront white racism at the very moment when they were seeking pleasure and relief, Black Americans doubled down on efforts to develop a separate Black-owned and -controlled recreational landscape, using the dollars in their pockets and land beneath their feet.[120]

[116] McCammack, *Landscapes of Hope*, 196.
[117] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters,* 22.
[118] Jeff Wiltse, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 125–126. One of the pools at Highland Park has been redesigned and rebuilt since its opening in 1932. The other pool was filled in by the mid-1950s.
[119] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters,* 41.
[120] St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harper & Row, 1945), 387.

Chapter Three

Our Own Outdoors: Black Recreational Sites in Jim Crow America (1920–1955)

Being Black in Jim Crow America was exhausting. The structural barriers to mobility, the enforced rituals of deference, the ever-present markers of caste, the constant threat of capricious violence, the daily denials of Black humanity. Racism and white supremacy taxed Black minds and bodies in ways that even empathetic white Americans could only dimly perceive, and that the vast majority of whites never bothered to acknowledge. To wage a struggle for freedom and survive under the weight of oppression, Black people needed time to rest, and spaces where they could enjoy, as W. E. B. Du Bois put it, "absolute freedom from the desperate cruelty of the color line."[1] As public outdoor recreational spaces like parks, beaches, and playgrounds became sites of struggle and strife, places where African Americans could expect to encounter discrimination and harassment at the very moment they were seeking pleasure and relief, growing numbers of Black communities, landowners, entrepreneurs, and social reformers worked to establish and develop leisure spaces that they could truly call their own, where Black people could enjoy, as one Black resort venture put it, "recreation and relaxation without humiliation."[2]

Beginning in the 1920s and continuing through the 1950s, African Americans opened numerous recreational sites (including, amusement parks, beaches, vacation resorts, religious retreats, campgrounds) that provided pleasures and accommodations to Black America that white America systematically denied. Blacks' pursuit of places of their own was less an acceptance of Jim Crow and more a means of undermining and transcending it. Black-owned and -operated resorts, beaches, campgrounds, and rural retreats became spaces where a Black counterpublic emerged, where Blacks not only found relief from the brutalities, indignities, and outrages of daily life, but pleasure, joy, and each other. For Blacks living under segregation, as Earl Lewis observed, "there was no contradiction between opposing the institution of Jim Crow and wanting to be with African Americans in African-American cultural spaces. One was clearly about oppression; the other clearly was about personal or collective desires and values."[3]

But even as Black recreational spaces brought people together, it also pushed others apart. Competition over scarce recreational resources and elite Blacks' desire for social exclusivity sharpened class divisions within Black America. The tapestry of Black recreational sites founded in the Jim Crow era reflected the diversity of Black America itself, and the many maneuvers and strategies Blacks employed to secure spaces for themselves.

Finding Safe Space

For Robert E. Jones, it was the desire to secure for Black families and children a place where they "may spend their leisure time under safeguard of a wholesome environment" that led the

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[1] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Hopkinsville, Chicago and Idlewild," *The Crisis* 22, no. 4 (1921): 160.
[2] Gary R. Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 310.
[3] LeNaye Symone Willis, "The Three R's: Race, Recreation, and Relaxation: African Americans and Leisure Experiences in Durham, North Carolina, 1955–1965" (Master's thesis, University of North Carolina, 1994), 43.

Methodist Episcopal bishop to acquire over 600 acres of property along Mississippi's Gulf Coast in 1923 and found Gulfside (Resort, ocean), the first Chautauqua-style religious resort for the "Negro race."[4] Jones conceived of the idea for a Black Methodist religious resort after having visited a Methodist Chautauqua in Ohio, where he witnessed the beneficial effects of "inspired amusement" on the white families and children who enjoyed its grounds. Afterward, he returned to his congregations in New Orleans determined to acquire "some spot on the shores of God's great Gulf of Mexico where his people could enjoy its refreshing waters unmolested and unafraid."[5]

Figure 1: *Under the Oaks at Gulfside*. Date Unknown. Waveland, Mississippi. Postcard Produced by the Albertype Co. of Brooklyn, New York. Courtesy of the Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Establishing an independent Black seaside resort in 1920s America—especially in Mississippi—was no easy feat. To acquire the land, the light-skinned Jones passed for white. Then, after transferring ownership to the newly formed Gulfside Corporation, Jones worked to build positive relationships with white business leaders and public officials whose acceptance would prove critical to the long-term security of any Black venture of this kind. This required Blacks such as Jones to perform all manner of rituals of racial deference and outward acceptance of segregation, including observing segregated seating and other Jim Crow arrangements at interracial events held on the grounds.[6]

The creation of Gulfside spoke to a growing concern among Black social reformers and religious leaders in the 1920s over the deleterious impact of modern amusements and urban temptations

[4] Andrew W. Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours: African American Beaches from Jim Crow to the Sunbelt South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 52–53. On the Chautauqua movement, see also Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[5] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 60.
[6] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 61–62, 73–75.

on Black families and youth. It also reflected Black churches' growing recognition that it could no longer continue to simply denounce all forms of leisure and entertainment as sinful; it must offer some "wholesome" alternative. Also indicative of the roles and functions Black churches came to assume under Jim Crow, Gulfside provided a host of social services, education programs, and training centers for families and children in need. Along with welcoming a steady stream of middle-class Black Methodist families for vacations, Gulfside hosted annual camps for boys, girls, and "tired mothers," a school for rural pastors, and a working farm and vocational school for at-risk youth. Gulfside's founders recognized, as one member later wrote, that "[t]o provide a playground was not enough. It must be more than a playground," he added. "It must be a place where city pastors might go and learn something about the problems of city life, of housing and health; and of industry; where rural pastors could assemble and be instructed not only in the technique of saving souls but of saving lives; where tired mothers might go and rest and learn something of Home Economics and the scientific care of children."[7]

On this stretch of gulf shore, Jones and his congregants built a recreational, educational, vocational, and spiritual space that aimed to address immediate needs and treat the chronic conditions of living under Jim Crow. For as it hosted groups and individuals, spaces like Gulfside worked to restore and replenish the minds and bodies of people battered by racism, oppression, and deprivation. "It was just like being in heaven," one Black woman said of her visits to Gulfside. "When you got on Gulfside's grounds, your whole everything changed…. If you went down and stayed a week, it was just like medicine."[8] "Here God speaks through the giant, aged oaks, the flowing and ebbing of the tides, fishermen casting their nets from the shore, plying their trade from boats in the distance or toiling by night for flounders, the starry heavens above and moonlit waters of the sea," minister J. Leonard Farmer remarked. "Why, my very Bible seemed a new book as I pondered its pages by the shores of Gulfside!" another minister added. "Gulfside," one guest wrote, "is more than a place. It is a spirit. It is more than acreage and cottage, dormitory and assembly hall, walk and grove; it is a living thing, that has breath, and warmth, and passion, and soul." Upon glimpsing the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico and exploring its hundreds of wooded acres for the first time, Black children who had spent their lives confined to rural farms or urban ghettos would, as one Gulfside member described, "scream and holler." "They had never seen the vastness" before.[9]

But even on this sprawling seaside campground, Black campers, vacationers, and students understood that the sense of freedom they enjoyed was conditional and limited. Gulfside's administrators devoted ample time and resources to maintaining cordial relations with their white neighbors and coming across as non-threatening to the Jim Crow order as possible. They still faced periodic attacks on their property, which were invariably met with cold indifference from white authorities. Black children learned that you "didn't go idly walking on the beach" and you never ventured past the property lines. You stayed on the Gulfside grounds and avoided trouble. "You could come here and go all over this place," one visitor recalled. "Now just as long as you

[7] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 61.
[8] Juanita Doris Franklin, interview by Andrew Kahrl, January 14, 2010, Foxworth, MS, audiotape in possession of the author.
[9] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 72. Pat Harvey, interview by Andrew Kahrl, January 8, 2010, Waveland, MS, audiotape in possession of the author.

stayed in front of here, now…. You had to stay within that realm. Nobody said 'don't go,' but you just knew."[10] Within that realm, generations of Black Methodists (predominantly but not exclusively from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas), found temporary reprieve from the indignities and deprivations that governed their daily lives, a spiritual sanctuary that brought Black congregants, parents, and children into communion with nature, and with each other.

Because it was a religious resort primarily focused on racial uplift, because its visitors made a point of keeping to themselves, and because its administrators stressed its accommodation to Jim Crow and worked to position its programs and schools as an asset to the regional economy, Gulfside garnered a measure of support from local white officials and acceptance from area real estate interests. Such was not the case for many other Black resort, entertainment, and outdoor recreational ventures launched at that time. In 1916, Cornelius King, a prominent Black realtor in Atlanta, Georgia, purchased 47 acres near the village of Kennesaw in neighboring Cobb County for a rural retreat for family and friends. The property became a popular draw for Atlanta's Black professional class, and King subsequently built several guest cabins, added tennis courts and an outdoor pavilion, and began playing host to a steady stream of Black families from the city and surrounding area. Dubbed King's Wigwam (Country Club), it became a meeting place for Black religious and political gatherings and soon began drawing visitors from across the South.[11]

As King's Wigwam attracted growing numbers of well-heeled Black guests from the city, resentment from the poor white tenant farmers who lived in Kennesaw and the surrounding area grew. In the summer of 1920, after a white woman accused a young Black male guest of rape, a white mob assembled and members of the local Ku Klux Klan mounted. The resort's managers succeeded in smuggling the accused male off the grounds and to safety. But, the King family concluded that it could no longer safely operate the resort and sold the land at a substantial loss.[12] The young woman subsequently dropped the rape charge. King family members believed that the rape accusation was intended to drive King's Wigwam out of business. Kennesaw "was a poor sharecropping town," King's daughter Nina later said. "It may have been difficult for them to see us there, having such good times as we did."[13]

For pleasure seekers and aspiring Black business owners, the good times never seemed to last long. In Norfolk, Virginia, local Black businessman Lem Bright opened a waterside resort on his property in 1915. At the time, it was the only section of waterfront in the city available to African Americans. Bright added a merry-go-round, shooting gallery, concessions, dining room, dance hall, and ran a jitney service from the city's Black neighborhoods. In its first season, Little Bay Beach (Resort, bay) hosted 47 different school, church, social, and fraternal groups, with weekend crowds numbering in the thousands. But in 1927, the resort suffered a devastating arson

[10] Genevieve Gordon, interview by Andrew Kahrl, January 8, 2010, Waveland, MS, audiotape in possession of the author. For more information on Gulfside, see Chapter 6.
[11] Mark S. Foster, "In the Face of 'Jim Crow': Prosperous Blacks and Vacations, Travel and Outdoor Leisure, 1890–1945," *The Journal of Negro History* 84, no. 2 (1999), 140.
[12] Foster, "In the Face of 'Jim Crow,'" 140.
[13] Stephen Birmingham, *Certain People: America's Black Elite* (Boston: Little Brown, 1977), 182.

attack that destroyed much of the grounds. Afterward, neighboring white landowners succeeded in preventing Bright from getting a permit to rebuild.[14]

The more grand and ostentatious the plan, the more endangered a Black-owned recreational development became. In southern California, a group of Black businessmen and professionals began construction on a massive country club in Huntington Beach, California. The Pacific Beach Club (Resort, ocean) was to include a bathhouse, ballroom, pavilion, restaurant, boardwalk, and 200 cottages. One reporter called it "the most pretentious amusement resort ever projected by members of the Race." Soon after they broke ground, the resort's owners encountered resistance. Local white business and real estate interests lobbied the county board of supervisors to condemn the property and turn it into a public park. Soon, contractors began pulling out of the project over concerns of an imminent attack. That came in February 1926, weeks before the club's grand opening, when the entire property was destroyed in a fire.[15]

Figure 2: A couple, Margie Johnson and John Pettigrew, enjoying their time on Bruce's Beach in Manhattan Beach, July 10, 1927. Courtesy of the LaVera White Collection of Arthur and Elizabeth Lewis.

Along with the arsonist's torch, Black pleasure seekers and proprietors also contended with the power of the state to expropriate Black property and eliminate Black space. In 1912, the African American couple Charles and Willa Bruce purchased two undeveloped oceanfront lots in

[14] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 132–133.
[15] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 48–49.

Manhattan Beach, California, and began welcoming guests. The Bruce's built a lodge and sold food and drink and rented swimsuits. Bruce's Beach (Beach) quickly became a popular destination for Black Angelenos "of all professional and economic statuses." But within weeks of its opening, white neighbors began harassing guests and enlisted local law enforcement to drive Black people away. The Bruce's white neighbor claimed ownership of a small strip of land between the Bruce's property and the beach and forced Black guests to walk one-half mile around the property to the beach. Police stood by to arrest any violators. "This small inconvenience," an article in the *Los Angeles Times* noted, "did not deter the bathers, ... pleasure bent, from walking the half mile … and spending the day swimming and jumping the breakers." The Bruces, meanwhile, remained defiant and vowed to continue operating their business. Soon, other African Americans began buying lots near the popular beach destination. In response, whites sounded the alarm over a "Negro invasion" of Manhattan Beach and redoubled their efforts to harass and intimidate Black visitors, vandalizing cars, attempting to set fire to Black-owned homes, and burning crosses on the beach. The village, meanwhile, enacted a host of new ordinances designed to discourage African Americans from venturing to the shore and forcing the Bruces out of business, including 10-minute parking limits on the oceanfront road, a ban on public bath houses where the Bruce's property was located, a permit requirement for any person seeking to operate a bathhouse or place of amusement, and a law against dressing or undressing in vehicles or tents.[16]

When Black Angelenos continued to flock to Bruce's Beach, in 1924 local officials invoked the power of eminent domain to condemn the Bruce family's property, ostensibly in order to create a public park. The Bruces unsuccessfully challenged the condemnation proceedings in court, arguing that the town's sole aim was "to divest ... members of the Negro Race of their ownership of said land, and their residence in said City, and to banish them ... from the portion of the said City which is nearly contiguous to the Pacific Ocean." After it condemned the Bruce's property and razed its cottages and clubhouse, the town began a concerted campaign to prevent Black people from accessing the beachfront, despite its legal status as public land. In response, the Los Angeles chapter of the NAACP launched a campaign to ensure public access to the shoreline. In the chapter's "first organized action of civil disobedience," the NAACP began staging swim-ins at the former Bruce's Beach. On July 17, 1927, four African Americans were arrested for resisting a police officer and disturbing the peace after attempting to swim. The peaceful protests succeeded in forcing the town to declare the shoreline open to the general public but could not restore what eminent domain had taken away. For the next thirty years, the lots that the town condemned sat vacant and unused. It seemed to prove, as historian Alison Rose Jefferson put it, "that the only public purpose served by the actions of the 1920s was to forcibly evict and attempt to exclude African American entrepreneurs and makers of a leisure community."[17]

Black Angelenos continued to resist white efforts to deny them access to and enjoyment of the Pacific coast. North of Manhattan Beach in the suburb of Santa Monica, African Americans congregated at a section of beachfront adjacent to one of the area's Black churches. White residents gave the Bay Street Beach (Beach) the derogatory name "The Inkwell," and public

[16] Alison Rose Jefferson, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 29–40.
[17] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream,* 40–51.

officials worked to confine Blacks' enjoyment of the city's shoreline. But, as Jefferson notes, African Americans remained "undettered by attempts to harass, molest, intimidate, or restrict them from Southern California public beaches[,]" and succeeded in claiming this section and making it a popular Black public recreational space in Jim Crow-era southern California.[18] As a teenager growing up in Santa Monica in the 1940s, the legendary African American surfer Nick Gabaldon taught himself to surf on the beach.[19]

A similar story unfolded in Atlantic City, New Jersey. After a new hotel that catered to white beachgoers opened near a Black beach in 1930, the owners petitioned to have Black vacationers moved further south. Local police "forcibly eject[ed]" Black families from the traditional Black beach and pushed them towards a new patch of beachfront in front of Missouri Avenue located behind a sandstone wall and conveniently out of view.[20] African American sunbathers transformed the new sandy stretch, later derisively called "Chicken Bone Beach," into a popular leisure spot. James Avery remembers Chicken Bone Beach (Beach) as a "big, broad beach," "almost a quarter of a mile of sand before you get to the water."[21] Beginning in the 1940s, Black business people provided entertainment to sunbathers in the area.[22] Avery recalls "all the black entertainers that were in town, no matter where they were entertaining"—plus the "the hoity toity, doctors, lawyers, everybody"—would "have cabañas along this beach."[23]

Other local governments worked to squash independent African Americans leisure and recreational developments before they could take shape. In Prince George's County, Maryland, an African American funeral home director from Washington, DC, acquired a stretch of land along the Patuxent River and subdivided it into 1,000 lots. He marketed lots at Eagle Harbor (Resort, river) to "the better people" of Washington and Baltimore, those fellow African Americans "who know and appreciate the value of vacation in modern life." Soon after, the county's tax assessor increased the assessed value of the land ten times its previous value, forcing property owners to pay exorbitant and grossly inflated property taxes that, critics contended, aimed to dissuade potential lot buyers and doom the venture. The deliberate over-assessment of Black-owned property was a common tactic used by white officials opposed to independent Black real estate developments. To gain a measure of independence, Eagle Harbor successfully petitioned the state to incorporate as a municipality. Other fledgling and established Black resorts and vacation towns did the same. In 1922 residents of Highland Beach (Resort, bay) in Maryland secured a charter from the state of Maryland to incorporate as an independent

[18] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream,* 86.
[19] Diane Cardwell, "Black Surfers Reclaim Their Place on the Waves," *New York Times,* August 31, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/21/learning/lesson-of-the-day-black-surfers-reclaim-their-place-on-the-waves.html. In 2019, the Bay Street Beach in Santa Monica was designated as an Historic District and placed on the National Register of Historic Places (Bay Street Beach Historic District, NRHP, 2019). See Bay Street Beach Historic District, Santa Monica Conservancy, https://www.smconservancy.org/property/baystreetbeach/.
[20] Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 40.
[21] James Avery, interview by Julieanna L. Richardson, June 24, 2003, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive, https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/james-avery-39.
[22] Ronald J. Stephens, "Chicken Bone Beach, Atlantic City, New Jersey (1900-)," February 12, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/chicken-bone-beach-atlantic-city-new-jersey-1900/.
[23] James Avery, interview by Julieanna L. Richardson, June 24, 2003.

municipality. The move gave the village's summer residents greater control over land use, zoning, taxation, and distribution of services.[24]

In seeking greater control over their land, elite Black summer communities also sought greater power to regulate who could access and enjoy these spaces. This assumed greater urgency as urban Black populations grew and demand for outdoor spaces and access to bodies of water during the summer months swelled. As whites drew the color line in parks, beaches, pools, and campgrounds, and as cities neglected Black populations' needs, African Americans went in search of leisure and relief where they could find it. By the early 1920s, summer residents of Highland Beach began expressing dismay over the growing numbers of African Americans from neighboring cities who ventured onto their shoreline to enjoy the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. They came there because it was a Black beach and, as such, they did not have to fear arrest or assault at the hands of white authorities or a white property owner. Residents complained of acts of vandalism by "drunken revelers" who treated the town as seemingly outside the scope of legal authority, and implored the sheriff's department to patrol the area at night, to no avail.[25] Invoking fears of an invasion of Black "criminal elements" and "undesirables," in 1926 the town's commissioners passed an ordinance that levied a ten-dollar fine on bathers and picnickers caught on the beach without a formal invitation from one of the town's property owners. They removed parking spaces and picnic tables from the beachfront. And they hired a Black man to work as security guard at the town's entrance and prevent the entry of any persons who were not residents or invited by a resident. They later replaced the Black guard with a white man, because, they concluded, Black intruders would not "obey a peace officer of their own." Responding to critics who charged that the town's exclusionary tactics mirrored those of white segregationists', Highland Beach's de facto mayor, Haley Douglass, grandson of Frederick Douglass, indicted the cities that had neglected urban Black populations' recreational needs. "The failure of large cities to provide adequate bathing and recreational facilities," Douglass charged, "has placed upon us the burden of protecting our property from roving trespassers whose ignorance or lack of self respect permits them uninvited to impose upon residents who bought their homes for the benefit of their own families and friends."[26]

Like their predecessors, new vacation resort ventures established by Black professionals in the 1920s and 1930s also worked to engineer an exclusive community through tightly regulating land sales and placing restrictions on property use. In 1936, executives in the Afro-American Life Insurance Company purchased 200 acres of land (including 3,500 feet of ocean frontage) on Amelia Island, a barrier island on the Atlantic coast in north Florida and founded the resort town of American Beach (Resort, ocean; Beach).[27] As conceived by the Afro-American's founder and chief executive A. L. Lewis, lot sales at American Beach aimed to generate revenue for the company's employee pension fund. But those sales would be limited to a "select group of Negro citizens."[28] Property deeds specified the minimum cost of construction on new houses,

[24] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 93–96. Today, as one of Maryland's smallest municipalities, Eagle Harbor remains a largely African American community.
[25] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 100.
[26] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 99–101.
[27] Richard Oscar Cutler, "Amelia Island, Florida: A Geographic Study of Recreation Development" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 1965), 167.
[28] Jesseo Thomas, "Below the Mason-Dixon Line," *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 27, 1938.

prohibited gambling and alcohol sales and other "noxious" behaviors such as playing loud music.[29] As one early account of the real estate venture described, "Lots are only sold to persons who agree themselves to occupy the building when constructed and to conform with other regulations which guarantee the most wholesome recreation and the most neighborly spirit of cooperation."[30] It also aimed to ensure that only a select set of Black Americans could access, much less feel welcome, in these exclusive spaces. As the historian N. D. B. Connolly notes, American Beach's founders "took a page from the property politics of white homeowners, using restrictive-covenant style neighborhood protectionism to maintain a class-exclusive character at 'their' beach."[31]

Laying Burdens Down

African American migration into cities and entry into a wage-based economy generated increased demand for leisure and recreational opportunities among working Black families and youth. What, for socially exclusive enclaves like Highland Beach, and aspiring ones like American Beach, was seen as a threat, was to an emergent class of Black entrepreneurs and entertainers, an opportunity. Outside of Wilmington, North Carolina, an African American family subdivided a portion of its hundreds of acres of coastal property in 1922 and developed a commercial, leisure, and entertainment mecca. Dubbed Seabreeze (Resort, ocean), the site featured a three-story hotel, a row of rental beach cottages, an amusement park, several restaurants, and a proliferating number of dance halls and "juke joints."[32] In contrast to exclusive destinations for Black professionals and their families, Seabreeze welcomed all comers and exhibited a greater tolerance for a range of licit and illicit pleasures. As one African American visitor recalled, Seabreeze was "designed to the ordinary expression of black people who were out to have a good time and they did everything they could to do that. And everything went.... Booze. Women. Rentin' rooms. Raisin' hell—you name it."[33]

While by night Seabreeze hosted adult entertainment, by day, it welcomed church groups and families. It provided a range of leisure and recreational options, from fishing to dancing. It welcomed people of all classes, from Black professionals, businessmen, and blue-collar workers from neighboring cities, to day laborers and tenant farmers from the state's interior. And rather than try to exclude the poor or compel working people to conform to a middle-class code of conduct and appearance, it welcomed people as they were and provided a space for them to experience and enjoy nature on their own terms. "A lot of poor people came to the beach," Assata Shakur (nee JoAnn Byron), who spent her summers working at her family's dance hall and night club recalled.

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[29] Russ Rymer, *American Beach: A Saga of Race, Wealth, and Memory* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 166.
[30] Thomas, "Below the Mason-Dixon Line."
[31] Nathan Daniel Beau Connolly, "By Eminent Domain: Race and Capital in the Building of an American South Florida" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008), 112. For more information on American Beach, see Chapter 6.
[32] Jennifer Bower, "Our Coast: A Shelter During Segregation," *Coastal Review Online*, September 18, 2015, https://www.coastalreview.org/2015/09/our-coast-seabreeze/.
[33] Leroy Upperman, M.D., interview by Karen Ferguson, July 20, 1993, Behind the Veil Oral History Project: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South, Duke University, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/behindtheveil/btvnc07048.

> Usually a lot of little children were with them and they wouldn't have bathing suits. They went swimming in whatever clothes they had worn to the beach, and half the time the little kids wore nothing. Then there were those who came to put on airs, usually in the evening, all dressed up to eat dinner…. Then there were the goodtimers. Their cars smelled like whiskey. They would dance a lot, eat a lot, spend a lot on the piccolo, and many times I would wonder if they had made it home all right.

"One of the moving things," Shakur recalled, "was when someone saw the ocean for the first time. It was amazing to watch. They would stand there, in awe, overpowered and overwhelmed, as if they had come face to face with God or with the vastness of the universe."[34]

While visitors came for the opportunity to unwind, breathe in the salty air, eat clam fritters and other fresh catches, dance to the sounds of touring jazz and R&B artists, and commune with nature, for the numerous small business owners and entrepreneurs who ran the hotels, restaurants, and dance halls and engaged in various hustles by day and by night, places like Seabreeze were a chance to make money. Like Seabreeze, Carr's and Sparrow's Beaches (Resort, bay; Amusement Park) in Maryland began as an attempt by the children of a Black landowning patriarch to generate income from their family's property holdings. Upon their father's death in 1928, the children of Frederick Carr inherited his 180 acres of land along the Chesapeake Bay south of Annapolis. Three years later, daughter Elizabeth Carr began running advertisements in Black newspapers welcoming guests to stay at a cottage on the family's farm. A year later, another of Carr's daughters built several cottages and cabins and graded three hundred yards along the waterfront for a beach. By the mid-1930s, the Carr family welcomed a steady stream of church groups, fraternal clubs, neighborhood organizations, and day-trippers from nearby Annapolis, Baltimore, and Washington, DC.[35]

Initially, the Carr family provided the open space, and visitors brought the rest: food, entertainment, amusements. But as the site's popularity among urban Black families and organizations grew, the Carrs invested in its development. Daughter Florence Sparrow constructed a playground and baseball diamond on the grounds and purchased sets of beach umbrellas and chairs. They began hosting annual events that aimed to draw big crowds and generate revenue, such as a Bathing Beauty Contest, first held in 1936. They built an open-air pavilion, and hired a music promoter to book bands, comedians, and other acts. They hired booking agents in Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, and began offering discounted group rates to churches and organizations. By the late 1930s, Sparrow's Beach employed over 50 seasonal workers and expanded its offerings to include food stands, carnival games, bathing suit rentals. Throughout the summer, it played host to a steady stream of touring jazz bands and musicians. In neighborhoods like Washington's Deanwood, group-sponsored trips to the Maryland site proved so popular that, as one former resident recounted, "the community practically shut down on these days."[36]

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[34] Philip Gerard, "The 1950s: A Shared Rhythm," *Our State*, January 29, 2019, https://www.ourstate.com/a-shared-rhythm/. For more information on Seabreeze, see Chapter 6.
[35] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 179, 182–183.
[36] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*.

By the early 1940s, dozens of Black outdoor amusement and entertainment venues were scattered across the country. Most attracted strictly local crowds and reflected the tastes and sensibilities of these local audiences. But in the years to come, these sites would play a formative role in fostering the emergence of a Black commercial and consumer culture that was national in scope. As a syndicate of touring Black musicians and performers took shape, Black resort towns and amusement venues became key stops of what came to be known as the "chitlin circuit." Summer itineraries for some of the era's most renowned Black jazz and R&B performers listed numerous Black-owned leisure venues and outdoor spaces. At each stop, musicians brought their sounds to once-isolated pockets of Black America—places like Chowan Beach (Beach) in eastern North Carolina, or Riverside Beach (Beach) outside of Charleston, South Carolina—and through their touring, facilitated the cross-pollination of Black musical styles and sounds.[37]

Travel and Vacationing in Jim Crow America

The mass production of the automobile and growth of a national network of highways vastly expanded African Americans' recreational and vacationing options. Prior to the 1930s, most African Americans who possessed the time and resources to travel did so by rail, where they were often forced to endure discrimination and humiliation at every turn. "Did you ever see a 'Jim-Crow' waiting room?" W. E. B. Du Bois wrote. "[T]here is no heat in winter and no air in summer …; to buy a ticket is torture, you stand and stand and wait and wait until every white person at the 'other window' is waited on." Then, when you are waited on, "The agent browbeats and contradicts you, hurries and confuses the ignorant, gives many persons the wrong change, compels some to purchase their tickets on the train at a higher price, and sends you and me out on the platform, burning with indignation and hatred!" And that was just the start of a Black person's journey. On the train, Blacks were forced into the Jim Crow car, where "the plush is caked with dirt, the floor grimy, and the windows dirty." Clean water and food were unavailable to Black travelers. "As for toilet rooms, —don't!" And danger awaited Blacks at every train stop, or whenever they had to change cars or stay overnight in unfamiliar locales, which could be "without accommodation and filled with quarrelsome white persons who hate a 'darky dressed up.'"[38] Describing the travails that awaited Black travelers on the nation's passenger railroads, the journalist George Schuyler lamented, "there is no more trying state in this humdrum Republic than being simultaneously a Negro and a traveler. Indeed, the troubles of Job seem trivial in comparison with those that bedevil the poor Aframerican who ventures forth to see his country."[39]

In contrast, the automobile seemed to promise Black travelers a measure of freedom. It "enables him to avoid the wretched 'Jim-crow' railway cars and widens the circle of possibilities for his outing," Du Bois observed.[40] As a result, "[A]ll Negroes who can do so," Schuyler remarked, "purchase an automobile as soon as possible in order to be free of discomfort, discrimination,

[37] Chowan Beach continued to serve African American resorters through the 1980s but following competition from amusement parks the property was sold in 2004. In 1975, the city assumed control of much of Riverside Beach and later sold it to a company who developed a private community on the site.
[38] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1920), 176–177.
[39] George Schuyler, "Traveling Jim Crow," *American Mercury* 20, no. 80 (1930): 423.
[40] "The Color Problem of Summer," *The Crisis* 36, no. 7 (1929): 235.

segregation and insult."[41] Indeed, despite costing roughly one-half of the annual salary of a factory worker in the 1930s, "to many black Americans," historian Candacy Taylor notes, "the freedom that came with owning a car was worth the sacrifice."[42] Automobiles, historian Gretchen Sorin writes, not only "made self-directed travel a possibility when travel by bus and train, controlled by others, could lead to humiliating or even life-threatening encounters. Owning a car [also] demonstrated black American success in a nation where that success was often thwarted."[43] Black rates of car ownership climbed steadily in the 1930s, and then rose sharply in the years following World War II, as did Black recreational travel and vacationing.

But while the number of Black travelers on America's roads during the summer months grew, the challenges and dangers they faced on the open roads remained: hotels, gas stations, and restaurants that refused to provide service, racist law enforcement patrolling rural highways, accidental entry into a "sundown town" after dark, and other hazards of "driving while Black." Such insults and indignities were not limited to the South but were nationwide.[44] "Many colored families have motored all across the United States without being able to secure overnight accommodations at a single tourist camp or hotel," the African American journalist George Schuyler wrote. To prove his point, in 1943 Schuyler reached out to 105 white-owned hotels and resorts in the supposedly "civilized and democratic northeastern states" inquiring about accommodations for a "colored family of three planning a two-week vacation[.]" Only 31 establishments replied to Schuyler, and of those, only one (an inn in Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania) said they could accommodate his family.[45]

Weary of the discrimination Blacks faced when traveling and seeking accommodations, in 1936 Victor Hugo Green, a postal carrier in Harlem, published the first travel guide for Black Americans. The first edition of the *Green Book* was regional in focus, listing the names and addresses of hotels and restaurants in the greater New York area that accommodated African Americans. Subsequent editions expanded to include non-discriminatory establishments across the country, as well as tips and recommendations for Black travelers venturing into any region of the country. When it resumed publication following World War II, the *Green Book* had grown to include listings for national parks, hotels, tourist homes, restaurants, and attractions in nearly every state, and had become a veritable "Yellow Pages of black-owned businesses" in America. More than a "AAA guide for black people," the *Green Book*, Taylor contends, "represented the fundamental optimism of a race of people fighting tyranny and terrorism." At the same time when civil rights activists launched "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns, the *Green Book* offered Black people a guide to buying Black when on the road. With each subsequent

[41] Schuyler, "Traveling Jim Crow," 432.
[42] Candacy Taylor, *Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America* (New York: Abrams Press, 2020), 38.
[43] Gretchen Sorin, *Driving While Black: African American Travel and the Road to Civil Rights* (New York: Liveright, 2020), x–xi.
[44] See, for example, Joseph D. Bibb, "Service Refused: Color Lines Drawn on Vacationers of the Darker Minority," *Pittsburgh Courier,* September 6, 1952.
[45] George Schuyler, "Vacation Daze," *Common Ground,* Spring 1943, 41–44.

edition, the listings in the *Green Book* both reflected and helped further the growth of Black vacationing and travel.[46]

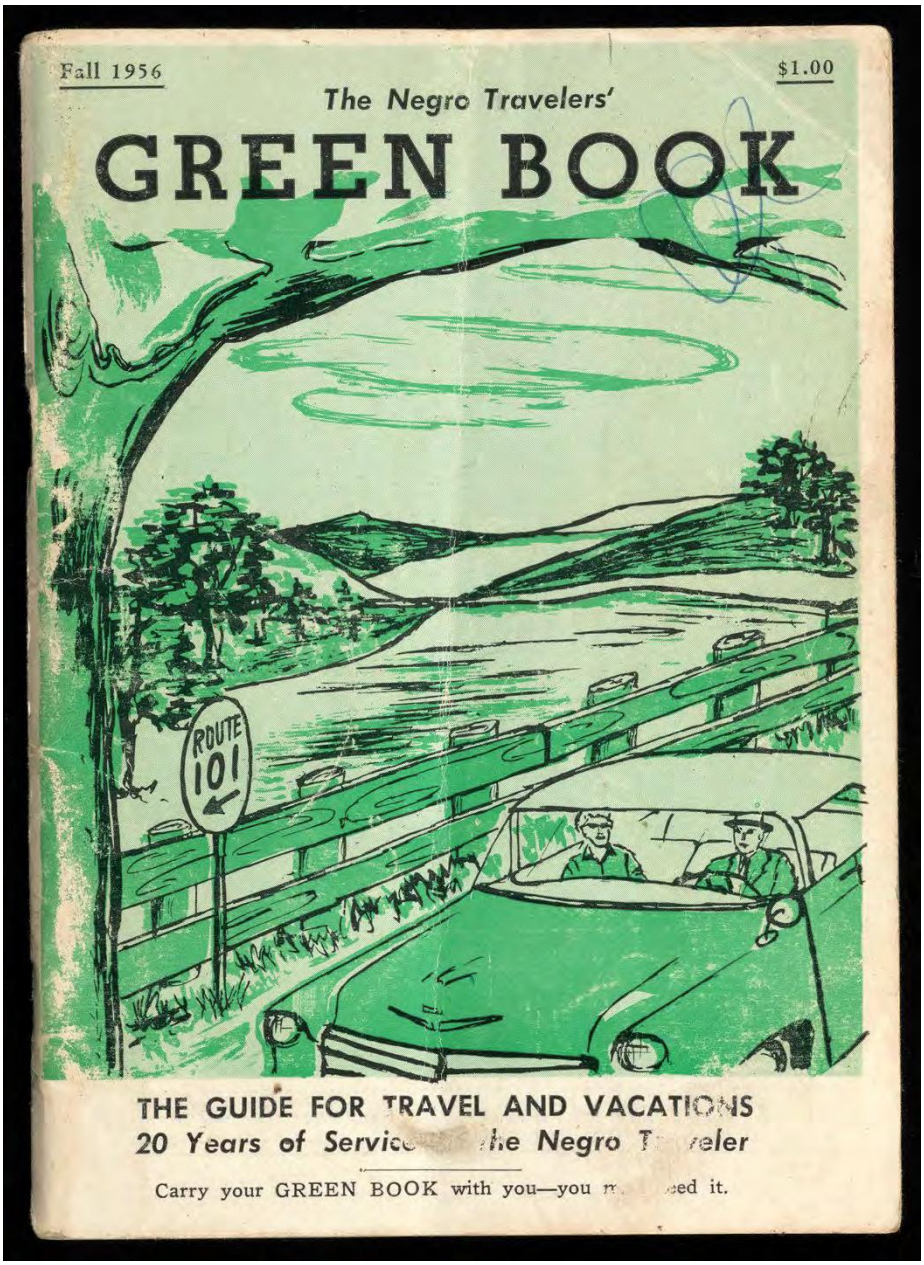

Figure 3: *The Negro Travelers' Green Book: 1956: The Guide for Travel and Vacations*. Published by Victor H. Green & Co. Courtesy of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Book Division, New York Public Library Digital Collections.

The *Green Book* was one of several travel guides and directories for Black travelers published during these years. In 1939, the National Park Service published a Directory of Negro Hotels and Guest Houses in the United States, while the Interior Department compiled a listing of lodging

[46] Taylor, *Overground Railroad,* 13–14.

sites available to Black travelers. The first edition of *Travelguide,* sporting the tagline "Vacation and Recreation without Humiliation," was published in 1947. And in 1952, the National Hotel Association, representing Black-owned hotels and motels, published *The Go Guide to Pleasant Motoring,* which it marketed to Black church and fraternal groups seeking accommodations for large groups.[47]

Travel guides helped Black vacationers navigate the dangers and indignities of Jim Crow America. Black travelers learned how to handle the rest. Before leaving on a vacation or weekend trip, Black families stocked their cars with food, bedding, portable toilets, even full cans of gas, to avoid having to make a stop. "Black parents sheltered their children by stopping as infrequently as possible until they reached a physically and emotionally 'safe' destination," Sorin notes. Growing up in the 1950s, historian Spencer Crew remembers how infrequently his family ever stopped when traveling. "[T]hat big old car was like a cocoon. We didn't know anything except what we saw out the side windows.... Our parents protected us from all the racist stuff along the road."[48]

Before the *Green Book* and other similar publications, Black travelers learned about hotels and resorts and other accommodations by word of mouth or through advertisements in Black newspapers and periodicals. With a national circulation, the *Green Book* helped to foster a national network of establishments servicing Black travelers' needs, one that ranged from white- and corporate-owned chain hotels and restaurants that welcomed Black patronage to "tourist homes" run by Black women who rented out rooms in their homes to Black travelers as a way to earn extra income. Over the course of its run, the *Green Book* listed over 1,400 such homes that offered accommodations to Black travelers. The inclusion of these sites, historian Mia Bay notes, helps explain the *Green Book'*s popularity among Black travelers. Unlike other guides, which only listed Black-owned hotels, the *Green Book*'s inclusion of tourist homes afforded travelers more hospitable options that "fit comfortably within Black traditions of organizing trips around visits to friends and family."[49]

For most Black travelers, spending a night at a tourist home or enjoying a meal at a Black-owned restaurant marked one stop in a longer journey toward a destination. By the late 1930s, the summer vacation was emerging as an annual ritual for growing numbers of automobile-owning American families, with national parks one of the chief destinations. The mass production of automobiles and rise of automotive travel coincided with the creation of two new national parks in the eastern U.S. in the 1930s. In 1935, the National Park Service established Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. Five years later, it established Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee. These two parks, the first major parks located in the eastern U.S., attracted large numbers of visitors. Two years after it had opened to the public, Shenandoah National Park became the first park to draw over 1 million visitors.

By the late 1930s, approximately 10,000 African Americans were visiting Shenandoah National Park annually, roughly 1 percent of the total number of visitors, more than enough to throw the

[47] Taylor, *Overground Railroad,* 14.
[48] Sorin, *Driving While Black,* 80, 40.
[49] Mia Bay, *Traveling Black: A Story of Race and Resistance* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2021), 145.

NPS's muddled and contradictory racial policies into sharp relief.[50] For years, NPS officials had attempted to avoid the race issue entirely by denying it had a policy and instead claiming to adhere to "local customs." In practice, that meant that Black visitors to many national parks could expect to be denied access to picnic grounds, shelters, and other accommodations and treated as an unwelcome presence by park rangers and local operators. But following the establishment of these new parks, Black leaders stepped up their demands that the federal government take active measures to ensure that Black visitors would be welcomed and receive equal treatment in national parks. "Few needs of the great mass of Southern negroes are so completely underserviced as those of recreation," the executive secretary of the Urban League T. Arnold Hill wrote to Interior Secretary Harold Ickes in 1935. "The masses in such cities as Atlanta, Birmingham, Montgomery, New Orleans and similar localities," Hill argued, must have "a chance to build themselves physically and to enjoy the natural beauties of their states to a degree which is now denied them."[51]

Ickes was sympathetic to Hill's demands. Before becoming Secretary of the Interior, Ickes had served as president of the Chicago chapter of the NAACP and had been an outspoken advocate for civil rights. As Interior Secretary under President Franklin Roosevelt, Ickes pushed the NPS to provide equal accommodations to Black visitors. In 1938, Ickes appointed William J. Trent to become his adviser on Negro affairs, and among his first assignments, directed him to conduct a study of African Americans' access to outdoor camping and recreation. The following year, Trent denounced the NPS's segregationist practices at a meeting of NPS superintendents.[52]

Regardless of his beliefs, Ickes knew that the fate of segregation in national parks rested in the hands of those who controlled NPS's budget: the southern senators and congressmen who controlled Congressional committees and dictated the terms of all federal appropriations. Rather than directly confront Jim Crow policies in new and existing national parks, Ickes and NPS Director Arno Cammerer instead sought to carve out spaces within national parks that Blacks could enjoy for themselves, albeit on a segregated basis. At Shenandoah National Park, that meant that Black visitors could only camp and picnic at a single site along Skyline Drive, Lewis Mountain.[53]

Completed in the summer of 1939, the Lewis Mountain Negro Area (Campground) included 40 picnic tables, 12 fireplaces, and 30 camping sites. A lodge at the site, completed two years later, included a dining room. The entire facility was managed and run by an all-Black staff. In the years that followed, officials in the Interior Department continued to press for the full

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[50] Susan Shumaker, "Untold Stories from America's National Parks: Segregation in the National Parks," 2009, accessed December 8, 2020, http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/media/pdfs/tnp-abi-untold-stories-pt-01-segregation.pdf [https://perma.cc/5BH6-M458]. See also Terrance Young, "'A Contradiction in Democratic Government': W. J. Trent, Jr., and the Struggle to Desegregate National Park Campgrounds," *Environmental History* 14, no. 4 (2009): 651–682.

[51] Young, "'A Contradiction in Democratic Government,'" 657.

[52] Young, "'A Contradiction in Democratic Government,'" 662–663.

[53] Reed Engle, "Laboratory for Change," *Resource Management Newsletter*, January 1996, reprinted in Segregation and Desegregation at Shenandoah National Park, National Park Service (Oct. 12, 2018), accessed December 8, 2020, https://www.nps.gov/articles/segregation-and-desegregation-at-shenandoah.htm [https://perma.cc/ AB3A-FPRX]. On Lewis Mountain, see also Susan Sessions Rugh, *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 147–151.

desegregation of Shenandoah National Park, or at the least, removal of signs and brochures that designated it as a "Negro area." In 1940, the Interior Department ordered park rangers to cease distribution of maps and pamphlets that identified Lewis Mountain as being "for colored visitors."[54] Other national parks in the southeast similarly tried to practice Jim Crow on the sly. At Prince William Forest Park (Campground) in Virginia, park rangers designated two of the park's five campgrounds as "Negro camps."[55] Regardless of federal policy, in the parks rangers continued to practice segregation and engage in forms of racial steering. The issue would remain unresolved until the onset of the civil rights movement.

Figure 4: Lewis Mountain Entrance Sign, Shenandoah National Park. Date Unknown.
Courtesy of the National Park Service

In the meantime, Black travelers continued to flock to scenic mountainsides, seashores, and lakes in unprecedented numbers. Beginning in 1947, the Black magazine *Ebony* offered readers an annual listing of Black vacation destinations across the United States. The annual listing of vacation options spoke to the growing demand for vacation travel among African Americans in the postwar era and served as an index of the growing numbers of sites being established to meet this demand.[56]

In southern California, Lake Elsinore (Resort, lake) emerged as a popular vacation destination for prominent Black families and celebrities living on the west coast. African Americans began venturing to the Lake Elsinore Valley in the early 1900s, drawn by the area's hot springs and other natural attractions. In 1910, a hotel that welcomed African American guests opened. Seeking to ensure that Black people would retain "a footing on the lake" and not be subject to

[54] Shumaker, "Untold Stories from America's National Parks."
[55] Kurt Repanshek**,** "How The National Park Service Grappled With Segregation During The 20th Century," August 18, 2019, accessed April 1, 2021, https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2019/08/how-national-park-service-grappled-segregation-during-20th-century.
[56] "Where to Go Vacationing," *Ebony*, July 1947, 14.

harassment and exclusion, in 1921 a group of Black investors from Los Angeles formed the Lake Shore Beach Company, acquired 50 acres on the lake's northeastern corner, and began selling lots to fellow Black Angelenos. The Black section of the lake grew in fits and starts over the next two decades, and by the late 1940s had become, as *Ebony* magazine described, the "best Negro vacation spot in the state," drawing a steady stream of Black musicians and celebrities, and supporting the largest Black hotel on the west coast and a number of entertainment venues.[57] Closer to Los Angeles, the Black resort development Eureka Villa opened in 1928 with lot sales to families to build second homes. In 1939, residents succeeded in obtaining federal funding through the New Deal-era Works Progress Administration to construct a new bathhouse and Olympic-sized swimming pool. In the years that followed, the re-named Val Verde (Resort) grew to include tennis courts, a golf course, picnic grounds, and other recreational attractions that made it a popular draw for Black Angelenos, who dubbed the resort the "Black Palm Springs."[58]

In the years following World War II, African American demand for recreational options grew alongside their rising incomes and mobility, and there were no shortage of Black businessmen and women and "race leaders" seeking to respond to and capitalize on that demand. These included some of the era's leading Black educators and power brokers. In 1945, Mary McLeod Bethune, renowned educator, confidante of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and member of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet," partnered with a group of Black business and civic leaders to purchase over two miles of beachfront property south of Daytona Beach, Florida and near her namesake, Bethune-Cookman College (Bethune-Cookman College Historic District, NR, 1996) (Resort, ocean). Frustrated that she, her students, and others in the community were frequently discriminated against at Daytona Beach, "the World's Most Famous Beach," she endeavored to make Bethune-Volusia Beach "a year-round playground" for African Americans.[59] By the early 1950s, 800 lots had been sold, and the beach's busiest weekends drew several thousand visitors from across the southeast.[60] Bethune Beach developed a wide variety of entertainment for the masses including a ferris wheel and race track where spectators could enjoy stunt riders, motorcycle and hot rod races.[61]

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[57] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream,* 111–12, 126. Lake Elsinore's slow decline as a vacation community began in the 1940s as environmental and man-made factors caused lake levels to drop. Beginning in 1955, except for 1958, the lake remained largely dry until it was partially refilled in 1964.

[58] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream,* 179–217. For more information on Eureka Villa, see Chapter 6.

[59] Casmira Harrison, "Bethune Beach Is Now Named Historic Site," *The Daytona Beach News-Journal*, May 19, 2017; "Florida's First Negro Resort," *Ebony*, February 1948. Mary McLeod Bethune's home (Mary McLeod Bethune Home, NRHP, 1974), constructed on the campus of Bethune-Cookman College in 1925, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 and later included in the Bethune-Cookman Historic District. The home is also listed as a National Historic Landmark.

[60] "Over 5,000 at Bethune Beach, Fla., July 4," *Atlanta Daily World*, July 9, 1950; Mary McLeod Bethune, "Thousands Flock To Bethune-Volusia Beach; Answer To A 34-Year Dream," *The Chicago Defender*, August 2, 1952.

[61] "July, Fourth At Bethune Beach," *Atlanta Daily World*, July 14, 1955; "Bethune Beach Host to Motorcycle Races April 5," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 25, 1953. The privately owned beach struggled financially from its inception and drew fewer visitors following integration. Many property owners sold to developers and many of those who attempted to hold on to their property in subsequent years found themselves unable to pay taxes on the property. Today, Black ownership in the community is negligible.

Figure 5: *On the Beach at Idlewild*. September 1938. Photo by the Abbott Sengstacke Family Papers/Robert Abbot Sengstacke. Courtesy of Getty Images

"[N]o longer is vacationing limited to just the well-heeled Negro top income group," *Ebony* exclaimed in 1947. "Today the steno and cabbie, the stockyards butcher and steel puddler take a couple of weeks out of town too."[62] The growing class and cultural diversity of African American vacationers not only gave rise to new recreational sites. It also changed the social atmosphere of older, more established ones. Take Idlewild (Resort, lake), for example. At the time of the United States' entry into World War II in 1941, the lakeside resort in northern Michigan remained a quiet retreat for families of black professionals from cities in the Midwest. The sounds and rhythms of summers there offered a stark contrast and, for the families who decamped there, a respite from urban life. Clevelander Harry Solomon remembered Idlewild in the late 1920s as "rugged, natural, and beautiful with dirt roads, trails and very few modern conveniences."[63] Brochures produced by the community's chamber of commerce framed summers at Idlewild as affording visitors a chance to "forget the hustle and bustle of the city":

> If you enjoy hiking and are a lover of nature, scenically lovely Idlewild presents for your approval and pleasure the surrounding woods with its stands of tall stately pines and mighty oaks, in which you can study shy graceful birds, native to this region; find delicate wildflowers whose beauty and gentle fragrance permeate the air; or pursue with your camera our bounteous supply of wildlife.[64]

In the years following World War II, the number of visitors coming to and purchasing lots at Idlewild rose sharply. The abundance and relative affordability of undeveloped lots at the 3,000-acre resort town made it feasible for middle-class Black families seeking a second home. In contrast to smaller, more insular and clannish resorts such as Highland Beach, town leadership welcomed the influx of newcomers, and worked to make the place more attractive and appealing to young couples and families. They built a new clubhouse, added baseball diamonds, and constructed docks along the lakeshore for boats. They opted not to impose tight restrictions of lot

[62] "Where to Go Vacationing," *Ebony*, July 1947, 14.
[63] Lewis Walker and Benjamin C. Wilson, *Black Eden: The Idlewild Community* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002), 42–43.
[64] Walker and Wilson, *Black Eden,* 103–104.

owners' use of property, and green lit the introduction of a bevy of new commercial establishments, including, at one time, fourteen hotels, nine nightclubs, six restaurants, a pool hall, photo studio, and roller-skating rink.

By the mid-1950s, summer crowds at Idlewild swelled into the thousands, with guests coming from across the nation and representing a broad cross-section of America's growing black middle class. School teachers, small business owners, and even manufacturing workers rubbed shoulders and shared summers with doctors, lawyers, and professors, as well as a growing list of Black musicians and celebrities. Renovated and reopened in 1952, Idlewild's Paradise Club became a center of summer nightlife and a major music venue attracting some of the most notable jazz and R&B performers of the postwar era. Earning the nickname the "Summer Apollo," the Paradise Club's list of performers included the Four Tops, Dela Reese, Ike and Tina Turner, Jackie Wilson, Ray Charles, Nat King Cole, B.B. King, and James Brown, among many others. On any given weekend, prominent Black figures like boxing champion Joe Louis, could be found in the club's audience. The club's owners struck a deal with a local radio station to air its summer weekend shows live and have them syndicated nationally.[65] By the 1950s, as one writer put it, the "resorters" at Idlewild "far outnumbered the rustics."[66] Similarly, at American Beach in north Florida, the founders' early efforts to restrict access to a select few and regulate conduct within gave way, in the postwar years, to a more democratic, carefree ethos. After lowering sales prices on lots and easing restrictions on commercial establishments, American Beach experienced an influx of middle- and working-class Black families and the establishment of a popular nightclub, Evans' Rendezvous, that became a popular spot on jazz and R&B performers' southern tours.[67]

Figure 6: *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Chicken Bone Beach*, 1956. Atlantic City, New Jersey. Photographed by John W. Mosley. Courtesy of the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries

[65] See "601. Paradise Club," Mason County Michigan's Cultural Trails, accessed December 8, 2020, https://cityofludington.oncell.com/en/601-paradise-club-188490.html.
[66] Robert B. Stepto, *Blue as the Lake: A Personal Geography* (Boston: Beacon, 1998), 8.
[67] Marsha Dean Phelts, *An American Beach for African Americans* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997).

Black entertainers also played a hands-on role in the development of Black vacation communities. Lucky Lakes Estates (Resort, lake), developed in the early 1950s on Luxton Lake in New York's Catskill Mountains, counted Noble Sissle, a composer and band leader, as executive vice president of the development. Developers used the cultural capital of Black stars to market the community to African Americans. In a promotion, they gifted star New York Giants center fielder Willie Mays a plot and used his likeness in advertising and also touted the purchases of entertainers like pianist and organist Bill Doggett. The appeal worked and African American families from Harlem, Queens, and the Bronx drove three hours one way to spend time in the mountain getaway. In addition to fishing, boating, swimming, and hunting, Black vacationers enjoyed jazz and lively entertainment at the Lucky Lake Country Club.[68] Melva Jackman, who vacationed in the community with her family as a child remembered "the clubhouse got to have a reputation of being [...] a night spot—not only in the community but in the area."[69]

Many Black Americans still preferred to enjoy their leisure during the daylight hours. As a Black child growing up in northeast Ohio in the 1920s, Bill Powell developed a love for the game of golf. Yet his ability to enjoy the game was limited by his skin color. After playing on courses in Europe while stationed there in World War II, Powell returned home disappointed to find that none of the golf courses in northeast Ohio would permit him to play. Emboldened by his experience fighting for democracy abroad, in 1946 Powell and a team of Black investors purchased a 78-acre former dairy farm. Together with his wife and children, Powell developed the site into a nine-hole course. Powell seeded the fairways by hand and cut the grass with makeshift equipment. Powell's son Larry remembers that the family built the course "piece by piece by piece by piece by piece." Following two years of development, Powell opened Clearview Golf Club (Clearview Golf Club, NRHP, 2001) (Country Club) to the public in 1948.[70]

Integration through Recreation

While many summer resorts and campgrounds that welcomed Black families and youth sought to provide a safe haven for Black people to gather apart from white society, others sought to challenge and transcend the color line by welcoming and seeking to foster interracial socializing and fellowship. In the northeast, a handful of Jewish and Christian summer camps began hosting multiracial groups of children in the years following World War II. Camp Nathan Hale (Campground), Camp Gaylord White (Campground), and Camp Fern Rock (Campground) actively worked to recruit and host white and Black youth and "demonstrate the peaceful possibility of integration." These places, historian Amanda Martin-Hardin notes, "worked to

[68] "Appoint Sissle Resort Officer," *The New York Age*, March 19, 1955; "Sissle Hosts Mays' Party," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 21, 1954; "Advertisement," *The New York Age*, June 29, 1957; "Advertisement," *The New York Age*, June 22, 1957; "Attention Hunters," *The New York Age*, October 29, 1955; Tina Spangler, *Lucky Lake*, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsG4YKsGpcE.

[69] Spangler, *Lucky Lake.* For more information on Luxton Lake, see Chapter 6.

[70] Justice B. Hill, "The Legacy of Love That Is Clearview Golf Course," The Undefeated (blog), September 30, 2016, https://theundefeated.com/features/the-legacy-of-love-that-is-clearview-golf-course/; "Course History," Clearview Golf Club, https://www.clearviewgolfclub.com/coursehistory. The course expanded to 18 holes in 1978 and today is managed by Bill Powell's children.

integrate various races and ethnicities socially and economically. Camp administrators believed that refashioning summer camps into microcosms of integration would advance equality in the outdoors and elsewhere[.]"[71]

Other integrated summer resorts and campgrounds functioned as extensions of existing integrated movements and organizations. The interracial religious movement led by Father Divine called the Peace Mission created several recreational resorts in upstate New York in the 1930s and 1940s. Most prominent among them was an estate Father Divine acquired on the Hudson River, known as Krum Elbow (Resort, river), located directly across from Hyde Park, the home of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Father Divine's followers flocked to the stately mansion and surrounding land to picnic, bathe, and enjoy extended vacations.[72]

Meeting Market Demands

The years following World War II saw the proliferation of new Black resorts and summer communities, many located outside of major urban centers in the North. In the small village of Sag Harbor (Resort, ocean) on the eastern end of Long Island, African American sisters Maude Terry and Amaza Lee Meredith worked to carve out such a space for Black families from New York City. After vacationing in a rental cottage in the neighboring village of Eastville, the sisters struck a deal with a white landowner to acquire 20 acres of undeveloped land in the late 1940s, which they subsequently subdivided and sold to friends and acquaintances from the city. They named the subdivision Azurest. Black professional and middle-class families snatched up lots and began building summer cottages nestled among the trees and facing the calm waters of Long Island Sound. The venture proved so popular that lots quickly sold out and two more subdivisions, Sag Harbor Hills and Ninevah, were created in the early 1950s. For the nearly 200 Black families who bought lots and built second homes there during that decade, summers at Sag Harbor offered a stark contrast to their lives in the city.[73]

In Wilmington, North Carolina, a white attorney and African American doctor partnered to acquire a one-mile portion of Topsail Island in 1949 for a beach community for more prosperous Black families from the region. The developers consciously worked to minimize commercial development and maintain a quieter, more family-oriented social atmosphere. Ocean City (Resort, ocean) "was designed to be as far from Seabreeze"—notorious for its late night revelry— "as it [could] be," resident Leroy Upperman described. To do so, its developers placed a host of deed restrictions on owners' use of their lots and limited commercial establishments to a motel and restaurant on the edge of the town. "The Ocean City Citizen's Council [ensured] no rowdiness or frivolity was allowed, so that children would feel free to roam … feel safe," another resident described.[74] In 1959, the community built a fishing pier, the first ocean pier available to

[71] Amanda Martin-Hardin, "Nature in Black and White: Summer Camps and Racialized Landscapes in the Photography of Gordon Parks," *Environmental History* 23, no. 3 (2018): 597.
[72] Carleton Mabee, *Promised Land: Father Divine's Interracial Communities in Ulster County, New York* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2008), 73–79.
[73] Sandra E. Garcia, "On Long Island, a Beachfront Haven for Black Families," *New York Times*, October 1, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/01/t-magazine/sag-harbor.html.
[74] Hope W. Jackson, "Stones of Memory: Narratives from a Black Beach Community" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2013), 74–75.

African Americans in the state.[75] Black and Native American fishermen from across the region flocked to the pier for the chance to cast a reel into ocean waters, many of them for the first time.[76]

Because of the pervasiveness of Black exclusion from most venues and accommodations, for Black recreational proprietors, there was always a demand in need of being met, no matter the activity being provided. In 1937, the African American couple Nolie and Lela Murray turned their 40-acre property in Victorville, California, on the edge of the Mojave Desert into "The Only Negro Dude Ranch in the World." Murray's Dude Ranch (Resort, ranch) offered a one-of-a-kind experience for Black Americans denied such opportunities at white-owned resorts. As one guest wrote to the proprietors, "I like to ride horseback very much. I have always wanted to spend a few weeks on a dude ranch. Being colored, I doubted I would ever have the chance." By 1940, the ranch grew to include baseball diamonds, swimming, and tennis courts. Heavyweight boxer Joe Louis trained there, and two Black Westerns, *Harlem Rides the Range* and *The Bronze Buckaroo,* were filmed there.[77]

The Cost of Segregated Recreation

While the number of private resorts and rural retreats grew in relation to the income and mobility of middle-class Blacks in postwar America, these luxuries remained out of reach to the majority of working Black Americans. For them, an afternoon along a riverbank, a picnic in a "colored" park, or a day at a Black-owned amusement park, was the most that many could hope for. Even these modest pleasures remained practically unavailable to most African Americans. Beginning in the 1930s, states and cities carried out public works projects that added numerous beaches, urban parks, and rural woodlands, hiking trails, and lakes for public use. By law or custom, African Americans were prevented from enjoying the fruits of these massive investments in public outdoor recreation. Southern states and cities enacted outright bans on African Americans' use of new state parks and urban beaches and parks constructed with public funds, while northern and western states employed various techniques to discourage African Americans' use.

Public investment in outdoor recreational amenities beginning under the New Deal not only failed to provide for Black Americans' needs, but often came directly at Blacks' expense. Many public works projects that designated outdoor areas for public recreation or enhanced the quality of public shorelines, parks, and wooded areas led to the forced removal of Black users or elimination of informal Black spaces. Public investment in the improvement of outdoor areas also made spaces attractive and appealing to whites and, as a result, introduced the color line to areas that whites and Blacks had previously shared or negotiated use of. On the Mississippi Gulf

[75] David Cecelski, "The Color of Water, Part 7– From Ocean City to Rainbow Beach," *David Cecelski* (blog), July 13, 2018, https://davidcecelski.com/2018/07/13/the-color-of-water-part-7-from-ocean-city-to-rainbow-beach/.
[76] Today, Ocean City remains a largely African American community but in recent years has battled hurricanes, climate change, and the threat of commercial development.
[77] Taylor, *Overground Railroad,* 220. In 1955, Nolie Murray sold Murray's Dude Ranch to actress Pearl Bailey following the death of Lela and a slow decline in the ranch's popularity. Bailey did not reopen the ranch and several years later sold the property to a family member. The property changed hands several times more, had a brief stint as a gym, and was burned down in a training exercise in the late 1980s.

Coast, sections of the shoreline that had long been available to African Americans for fishing, picnicking, or bathing became, after the completion of a flood control and coastal stabilization project in the early 1950s, off limits. Before the civil engineering project enhanced the desirability of the shoreline for recreational use, Biloxian Lee Owens recalled, "Anybody could go down there and sit on the beach all night long, because I used to sit down on that beach, water used to slap all over my feet down there. Fish down there. White and black used to sit down there together." But after the Army Corps of Engineers dumped over 7 million cubic yards of sand on the coast and created "the longest manmade beach in the world," "those white folks went stone crazy," as Owens put it. Whites, Owens remembers, began shouting, "'That's our beach. This ain't no nigger beach.'" In the years that followed, black children learned to stay away. "[W]e knew if we went on the beach, white people didn't care whether or not you were a child or not, they would kill you, beat you, or do anything that came to their mind," Black Mississippian Eva Gates remembered.[78]

Across the urban South, real estate development for whites resulted in further recreational deprivation for Blacks. In New Orleans, as residential development crept closer to the shores of Lake Pontchartrain in the 1920s and 1930s, concerted efforts to eliminate Black gathering places and forcibly remove Black bathers and picnickers ensued. In response to demands from the city's real estate board and white homeowners' associations, who feared that the presence of Black people at leisure would depress area property values, the city banned swimming or gatherings at the Seabrook (Beach) section of the shore that had been used by generations of Black New Orleanians and had previously been designated by the city for African American use. In the years that followed, African Americans reported being ejected from the area while whites fished, crabbed, and swam there openly. Black New Orleanian Louise Marion Bouise recounted her family's first confrontation with this new policy after years of swimming at the site:

> Not having transportation it was the habit to go, you'd get a truck and you'd go to the lake front. And somebody there, I think my father knew who had a truck, took members of my family and some of our friends to the lake front to go swimming… And after they got there the truck driver left them on the lake front and … told them a time he'd be back…. But they weren't there very long when policemen came along and told them they couldn't swim on the lake front, that they'd have to go. They couldn't even stay on the lakefront and wait for the truck driver to come back to pick them up. They walked from the lakefront home which was on St. Bernard and Broad. And in the party was one of our friends, a teenager or he was ten by that time. He had a deformed leg. But these policemen … said you'll have to move. And this young man with his brace on his leg walked all that distance home…. They threatened to arrest all of them if they did not leave that lakefront.

On another occasion, a Black teenager was violently assaulted by a plainclothes officer simply for traveling on the lakefront-bound bus while dressed in a swimsuit. A Black reporter called the incident part of the city's "crusade of brutality" against young blacks' pursuit of "wholesome recreation." In Norfolk, Virginia, following the arson attack on the Black-owned Little Bay

[78] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 11.

Beach, white real estate interests thwarted several attempts by the city to designate a single area of the city, including any portion of its 26 miles of waterfront, for a public beach or park for the city's sizable Black population. When the city eventually settled on a remote site, located over two miles from the nearest white neighborhood, for a "colored" public beach in 1930, thousands of white citizens descended on public meetings and circulated petitions in protest.[79]

Black exclusion from public places of recreation and cities' neglect of African Americans' recreational needs had deadly consequences. As temperatures warmed, and schools let out for the summer, Black youth in Jim Crow cities went in search of places to play. But while white children enjoyed access to a growing array of parks, playgrounds, beaches, and swimming pools, and received formal swimming instruction, Black children were forced to find fun in unsafe and often unsupervised outdoor areas. Drowning deaths and other accidental, preventable tragedies followed. In Charleston, South Carolina, "whites only" policies in the city's parks and swimming pools led Black children to seek out summertime relief in a ditch filled with street runoff locals referred to as "Horse Hole." Black parents tried to keep their children from going there, Mamie Garvin Fields recalled. "But the summertime gets very hot, and very humid," and invariably "the bolder ones would disobey their parents and cool off in one of the rivers, or they would go into the dirty water of the Horse Hole." And, nearly every summer, someone would drown.[80] In New Orleans, the local chapter of the NAACP found that, by the early 1940s, an average of fifteen Black children drowned in the city each summer. At the time, the city operated only a single public swimming pool for its entire Black population and had forced the closure of a swimming safety and training program for Black youth as part of its broader campaign to drive Blacks from the Lake Pontchartrain shore.[81] In Miami, Florida, Black youth who wanted to swim "had to do so among the manatee in the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) or, far more commonly, they waited for rainwater and run-off to fill rock pits at construction sites around the city," historian N. D. B. Connolly describes. To access the ICW, African Americans had to "risk harassment or physical violence venturing through white neighborhoods. And rock pits—with their hidden, underwater debris and treacherous, crumbling edges—made for dangerous swimming, leading to the drowning death of more than one child."[82]

Drowning deaths fueled Black outrage at the cruelties of Jim Crow and determination to secure from cities public places of recreation of their own. In Little Rock, Arkansas, the drowning deaths of three Black children along a "steep and dangerous slope" of the Arkansas River "hidden from view by weeds and heavy thicket" in the summer of 1949, led parents and activists to demand that the city provide recreational facilities in Black areas.[83] In Miami, Black civic leaders began petitioning city officials to designate an area of the city waterfront for "colored" use, invoking their status as taxpayers in demanding that the city provide them with a comparable return on their tax contributions as provided to white citizens. When Miami city officials claimed budgetary constraints prevented them from doing so, Blacks took direct action. In 1945, a group of seven African Americans entered a popular white beach and waded into the

[79] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 139, 141, 132–139.
[80] Mamie Garvin Fields and Karen Fields, *Lemon Swamp and Other Places: A Carolina Memoir* (New York: Free Press, 1983), 191–92.
[81] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 116.
[82] Connolly, "By Eminent Domain," 224.
[83] "Three Children Drown While Bathing in Arkansas River," *Atlanta Daily World,* August 10, 1949.

surf. The "wade-in" succeeded in its objectives of forcing the city to agree to create a Black beach. (The protesters made it clear they did not seek integration of white beaches, but instead, simply wanted a place of their own.) Afterward, city officials promised to create a beach for the city's African American population. The site it chose, Virginia Key Island, was far from ideal. "[T]hick with mosquitoes and sand flies and beset by terrible riptides," Virginia Key (Virginia Key Beach Park, NRHP, 2002) (Beach) had previously served as a U.S. Army training base for Negro soldiers during World War II.[84] Before the city agreed to build a toll road to the island, African Americans had to pool resources to hire a ferry to transport visitors there. But despite these inadequacies, the beach quickly became a popular draw, attracting upwards of 2,000 visitors on weekend days. In 1948, over 10,000 people flocked to the beach for a sunrise Easter service; in the years that followed, the number of attendees at this annual event grew, and it continues to be observed to this day.[85] The beach sported lifeguards, an all-Black security force, carousel, and miniature railroad for children, all of which Blacks had to tax themselves in the form of fees and fund-drives to provide and maintain.[86] But it was theirs. And, for white officials intent on preserving Jim Crow in white places of play, this provision of an undeveloped island for Blacks' use was a small price to pay to maintain the racial status quo.

In this and other Jim Crow cities, the price white officials were willing to pay to provide Black citizens with their own leisure spaces was small, indeed. Following the closure of informal Black gathering spaces along the southern lakefront, and in response to Black protests, New Orleans designated a remote stretch of shore, located fourteen miles from the city and inaccessible by public transportation, as the city's "colored" beach. Named Lincoln Beach (Beach), the site was surrounded on both sides by fishing camps, all of which dumped raw sewage into the waters, polluting the shore. A city health inspector deemed the waters "grossly contaminated" and unsafe for bathers. Black civic leaders denounced the site as wholly inadequate. Black youth, meanwhile, continued to venture to the Seabrook site, leading to tense, at times, violent confrontations with police. Seeking to end the impasse, in 1951 the city agreed to spend $500,000 to improve the Lincoln Beach site, expanding the shoreline, constructing two swimming pools (equal in size, white officials were quick to note, to the pools at the whites-only Pontchartrain Beach), and adding a clubhouse with restaurant and locker rooms as well as a small amusement park with rides. On May 8, 1954, a host of dignitaries, including the city's mayor and Louisiana's governor, were on hand for the dedication ceremony for Lincoln Beach. The African American head of New Orleans's People's Defense League told the assembled crowd that the beach's improvements marked a "step forward in the Negro's fight for first-class citizenship." In the years following its reopening, Lincoln Beach hosted a number of summer camps for underprivileged black youth in the city, where children were taught, among other life skills, how to swim.[87] In spite of the inconvenience and inadequacies, Lincoln Beach, like other

[84] N.D.B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 122. See also Gregory W. Bush, *White Sand Black Beach: Civil Rights, Public Space, and Miami's Virginia Key* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016).
[85] Connolly, "By Eminent Domain," 229–230.
[86] Connolly, *A World More Concrete,* 124. Following desegregation, the popularity and maintenance of Virginia Key Beach declined. In the early 1980s the beach was closed to the public and remained closed for more than two decades. In 2008, the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust reopened the beach to the public after a number of improvements and renovations.
[87] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 142, 152–154.

city parks and beaches designated for African American use, became a popular attraction and important cultural space, welcoming streams of children by day, and hosting dance parties, beauty contests, talent shows, and local and national musical acts by night.[88]

Working-class African Americans' demand for leisure and entertainment options fueled the growth of Black-owned and operated seasonal enterprises such as amusement parks and outdoor concert venues in postwar America. In 1948, a group of Black investors from Baltimore, including the city's largest "numbers" king "Little Willie" Adams, partnered to form the Carr's Beach Amusement Company and invested over $150,000 in buildings and improvements to the Carr family's waterfront landholdings outside of Annapolis, including construction of a covered, open-air stage for shows, midway, amusement rides, food stands, and nightclub. In the years that followed, Carr's Beach (Amusement Park) became the most popular summertime destination for working-class Black families and children in the mid-Atlantic region. The park's management partnered with a local Black-oriented radio station WANN to broadcast Sunday afternoon shows live. By the early 1950s, weekend crowds at Carr's Beach routinely exceeded ten thousand persons. A performance from Chuck Berry in the summer of 1956 drew a reported 70,000 persons to the outdoor venue.[89]

Many other privately owned, for-profit Black amusement parks and summer concert venues also saw crowds swell and profits increase during these years. In part, this reflected the spending power of wage-earning urban Black populations. But it also spoke to African Americans' yearning for cultural and economic spaces they could claim as their own. At Carr's Beach, not only were the performers on stage, kids on rides, and teenagers and young adults lounging on the beach and strolling the midway all Black. The people behind the enterprise and profiting from it were, as well, from the person selling tickets at the gate, to the deputy sheriffs hired to maintain order, to the corporate heads who ran the entire operation. Places like Carr's Beach in Annapolis, Bay Shore Beach (Resort, ocean; Amusement Park) in Hampton, Virginia, Seabreeze in Wilmington, and other venues played a formative role in the growth and dissemination of Black music and popular culture, and in the expansion of a separate Black economy behind the color line.[90]

During these same years, African Americans also challenged states to provide equal accommodations in state parks. While state parks predated the National Park System, it was not until the 1920s that states began to take active measures to preserve natural landscapes and provide recreational resources for its citizens. These efforts accelerated in the 1930s. During these years, states partnered with the National Park Service and New Deal agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) to acquire parkland and develop public facilities and amenities. Typically, federal agencies acquired the property (either through purchase or donation), and federal workers built the facilities, before handing the land over to states to operate. Between 1932 and 1942, southern states added 150 new state parks. African Americans were excluded from nearly everyone. While the NPS had an official nondiscrimination policy, park administrators were reluctant to enforce it. "Rather than

[88] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 197–198. See Chapter 4 for more information Lincoln Beach.
[89] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 187–192, 178. For more information on Carr's and Sparrow's Beaches, see Chapter 6.
[90] For more information on Bay Shore Beach, see Chapter 6.

use its significant power to equalize park opportunities," historian William O'Brien notes, NPS "chose to defer to state and local wishes."[91] This was typical of federal agencies during the New Deal. Southern Democrats used their control of Congressional committees to force virtually every significant piece of New Deal legislation to conform to Jim Crow. Bureaucrats in Washington learned to respect southern segregationists' power over the purse strings, and studiously avoided overt challenges to segregation.

As a result, the growing number of state parks across the United States, and especially in the South, remained (in fact if not in name) off-limits to Black America, with little effort by states to provide any separate outdoor accommodations. In 1940, there were only seven state park facilities scattered across the entire South that were available to African Americans. Beginning in the late 1930s, NPS officials, under pressure from civil rights organizations, began encouraging southern states to expand their outdoor accommodations for African Americans. Reluctantly, states began to add "Negro areas" to existing state parks or designated new park sites for "colored" only. Still, it wasn't until the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund (LDF) began filing lawsuits against segregated state parks in the late 1940s that southern states made attempts to "equalize" their park systems. It was all for show, a cynical strategy aimed at appeasing the courts and holding back the tide of civil rights. As O'Brien notes, "no state would pursue actual equalization." Instead, states looked for available lands deemed to be of "marginal economic value," "worthless for agriculture," and that could be "purchased at a reasonable price" for "Negro state parks."[92] In other words, land that was cheap and whose designation for "Negro use" would do nothing to upset the racial hierarchy.

Many "Negro parks" never made it past the planning stage. Those that did open saw few patrons. Park planners went to absurd lengths to accommodate white racist stereotypes. In South Carolina, park planners charged with finding suitable sites for Negro parks were told to eliminate from consideration areas located upstream from areas used by whites, for fear that black bathers would pollute the water. Mostly, states did as little as possible, and the Negro park facilities they claimed to provide existed in name only. Mississippi constructed a single state park for its black citizenry, Carver Point State Park (State Park) on Grenada Lake. On paper, Carver Point was equal in size and provided the same amenities as its whites-only counterpart. But its remote location and the poorly maintained roads leading there made Carver Point practically inaccessible.

When states did attempt to provide African Americans facilities of comparable quality and accessibility to those available to whites, they received pushback from those who feared such signs of equality threatened white supremacy. When the CCC constructed two identical Recreational Demonstration Areas (RDA) on Oklahoma's Lake Murray (Lake Murray State Park, NRHP, 2001) (State Park), white Oklahomans complained that the facility was "far too elaborate for Negroes."[93]

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[91] William E. O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 6–7, 44, 77.
[92] O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*, 7, 15, 53, 69.
[93] O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 118, 109–10, 54. Carver Point was maintained as a separate facility until 1972 when it was subsumed into Hugh White State Park. Lake Murray State Park continues to operate today and is open to all Oklahomans.

States' attempts to create "Negro state parks" also generated conflicting responses from African Americans. By the early 1950s, the NAACP was advancing legal challenges to the doctrine of "separate but equal" and rejected states' attempts at equalization entirely. Many African Americans, however, simply wanted access to outdoor parklands and were eager to make use of such sites while lawyers battled against Jim Crow in the courts. And, on the eve of the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education,* African Americans across the South were utilizing "Negro state parks" like North Carolina's Jones Lake State Park (State Park), for family gatherings, hiking, boating, fishing, and camping.[94]

Figure 7: Jones Lake State Park in North Carolina, one of the several "Negro" state parks created by southern states in the 1940s. Courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina

Whether the brainchild of Black reformers seeking to "uplift" the race, whites seeking to uphold segregation, or investors looking to turn a profit, the separate Black outdoor leisure and recreational spaces that proliferated across the United States in the mid-twentieth century testified to the creative ways that Black Americans defied Jim Crow. These spaces not only afforded African Americans places to rest, recuperate, commune with nature, seek pleasure, and find joy in the company of friends and family, they also nourished the formation of new communities and Black cultural practices and identities that transcended localities and regions. On the road and at their outdoor destinations, Black travelers, vacationers, and pleasure seekers became enmeshed in a broader community linked together in shared struggle.

[94] Jones Lake State Park continues to operate today and is open to all North Carolinians.

Chapter Four

Fair Play: The Fight to Desegregate Outdoor Recreation (1950–1965)

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the segregation of public schools violated the Constitution. The legal ramifications of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision extended far beyond schools and implicated all forms of segregation, including those found in leisure and recreational spaces. In overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the Court ruled that the mere existence of segregated facilities and accommodations violated African Americans' constitutional rights by placing a badge of inferiority upon them, one that mere equalization could not cure. The wording of the decision, in turn, prompted a broader shift in the strategies the civil rights attorneys and, later, activists employed in seeking equality. Before the *Brown* decision, local campaigns to secure access to outdoor recreational spaces and accommodations had focused on securing from state and local governments equal *but* separate accommodations for Black people, with the threat of Blacks seeking to integrate whites-only parks, swimming pools, or beaches employed as a means of forcing concessions from white officials. Following the *Brown* decision and with the backing of the NAACP's national leadership, the desegregation of outdoor space and full dismantling of Jim Crow in places of play became the end goal, not just a means to an end. As the historian Victoria Wolcott notes, "The legal histories of school integration and recreational integration were deeply intertwined."[1] This, in turn, raised the stakes in local contests over outdoor space and made African Americans' demands for access to whites-only beaches, parks, golf courses, and campgrounds a key element in a larger struggle to end American apartheid.

While civil rights attorneys and movement leaders were often the face of litigation challenging segregated recreation, Black youth and Black women were often the ones leading the fight. This reflected Black teenagers' and women's understanding of the importance of recreation in their lives and the lives of their children. In challenging whites-only policies and practices in public recreation and amusements, mothers who worried about the dangers that recreational exclusion posed to their children's lives and well-being, and Black youth who experienced first-hand the sting of exclusion, sought no less than to put the cruelty of Jim Crow on trial. By the 1950s, their concerns and direct actions against segregated recreation aligned with the litigation strategies being pursued by national organizations such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the NAACP, who saw in the denial of access to parks, playgrounds, beaches, and swimming pools an opportunity to challenge the legal foundations of Jim Crow.

Indeed, the fight to desegregate outdoor recreational space seemed, in some respects, to be one of the low-hanging fruits for the movement. Unlike disenfranchisement, employer discrimination, or school segregation, the segregation of outdoor recreation did not vest white Americans with obvious and tangible political, economic, and social advantages, and posed considerable costs and logistical challenges for state and local governments. Because of this, as early as 1951, civil

[1] Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle Over Segregated Recreation in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 115.

rights organizations such as the Southern Regional Council characterized racial segregation in public parks as Jim Crow's "Achilles heel."[2]

In other respects, though, the fight to desegregate places of leisure and recreation proved to be the most challenging and vexing for the movement. Because it often involved intimate spaces of bodily contact, and because the right to leisure and amusement offered few material benefits while threatening to confirm whites' most base stereotypes of Black people, desegregation campaigns often devoted as much time and attention to policing the actions of Black youth as it did in drawing attention to the injustices they faced. Movement activists were well aware of just how sensitive, and how fraught with danger, attempts to integrate white leisure spaces were—both for the individuals seeking access, and to the movement as a whole. Responding to one violent confrontation between white and Black youth in an amusement park, the NAACP admonished, "[E]very incident involving Negroes and whites is cited by our enemies as an argument against … non-segregated recreation."[3]

For many white Americans, the prospect of Black and white families and children playing, socializing, and competing in sports on an equal basis, however, challenged the very foundations of white supremacy, triggering deeply held anxieties over interracial mixing and intimacy.[4] It didn't threaten whites' pocketbooks or political power so much as their sense of superiority and ability to regulate the movement of Black bodies in public life—and, by extension, white men's ability to control the bodies and choices of white women and girls. It's why one judge in a pivotal case challenging segregation in places of public recreation deemed this issue "[m]ore sensitive than schools."[5]

The desegregation of public places of recreation especially touched a nerve among working- and lower-middle-class whites. Unable to afford membership in the private swimming pools and country clubs that middle-class whites flocked to to avoid desegregation, this class of whites came to deeply resent the threatened "loss" of public parks, pools, and golf courses, and fought to defend.[6] For these reasons, recreational areas became the site of some of the most pitched battles and triggered some of the most violent responses from whites of any issue during the civil rights movement.

Youth Activism

Following World War II and in the midst of the second wave of the Great Migration, northern cities experienced some of the first direct challenges to segregation of public recreation and amusement. In 1946, members of CORE and the National Negro Congress staged demonstrations outside the gates of Euclid Beach Park in suburban Cleveland, Ohio, challenging

[2] William E. O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016) 123.
[3] Victoria W. Wolcott, "Recreation and Race in the Postwar City: Buffalo's 1956 Crystal Beach Riot," *Journal of American History* 93, no. 1 (2006): 63–90, 85.
[4] Wolcott, "Recreation and Race in the Postwar City," 65.
[5] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 164.
[6] See Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 125.

the amusement park's exclusion of Black patrons. In a telling indication of whites' anxieties, the park's management eventually agreed to admit Blacks on the park's rides but maintained segregation of its dance floor, swimming pool, and roller rink. In Gary, Indiana, a group of African American youth formed Young Citizens for Beachhead Democracy in 1949 and announced plans to occupy the city's public beaches along Lake Michigan. As Wolcott describes, the group "were met by forty squad cars and scores of white residents who attacked their cars with baseball bats and lead pipes." This was common. Historian Arnold Hirsh found that, in post-World War II Chicago, "the worst violence occurred when the use of parks and beaches was contested."[7] In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, African Americans' repeated attempts to swim at the city's Highland Park pool in the late 1940s were consistently thwarted by mobs of white teenagers, and by local law enforcement, who arrested the Black swimmers for inciting a riot.

As with schools, children felt the sting of prejudice in places of recreation most acutely. "Recreational facilities," according to historian Rebecca de Schweinitz, "were one of the most common ways that young people collectively experienced Jim Crow, and many young blacks deeply resented the racism they encountered in leisure-time spaces."[8] For many Black children, being told that they could not enter places of outdoor play served as their introduction to racism in America. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's "first memory of racism" came by way of a commercial for the Glen Echo Amusement Park, located in suburban Maryland. "[Y]ou could just see the kids sliding down and on the rides[.]" She excitedly asked her mother if they could go. And "that's when she had to tell me, 'This is not—you cannot go,' and that was an eye opener."[9] Growing up in Louisville, Kentucky, in the 1950s, Andrew Wade IV begged his parents to take him to the Fontaine Ferry Park, not knowing that, as an African American, he was barred from entering. "No, not today. Maybe sometime, Not today," his father would reply. "This happened several times, whenever they rode that way," Wade recalled. Finally, one day, evidently realizing he could no longer make excuses, Wade's father told him the truth. "Son, I can't take you in there…. That park is for white people."[10] In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King Jr. captured that same experience from the parents' perspective, describing that moment "when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people[.]"[11]

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[7] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 75, 176; Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 65.
[8] Rebecca de Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World: Young People and America's Long Struggle for Racial Equality* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 181.
[9] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, interview by Larry Crowe, April 25, 2013, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive, http://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/A2013.007.
[10] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 179.
[11] Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," 1963, ProQuest, accessed April 14, 2020, http://search.proquest.com/docview/205008318/F777E62C272C4B9DPQ/2?accountid=14678.

Places of outdoor recreation also introduced Black children to the different forms of racial exclusion whites utilized, many of which were more subtle than a "whites only" sign at the gates, but for Black children, no less effective or traumatic. In what she called her "most humiliating Jim Crow experience," the Harlem Renaissance novelist Ann Petry recounted an incident from her childhood in Connecticut, when she went on a trip to a beach with her Sunday School class. She was the only "colored" girl in the group. The beach was technically "private," but that had never mattered before—until Petry came along. On this occasion, the group of children and their teacher were deemed trespassers, and told by a guard, "If you don't get off the beach I'll call up the sheriff." The children were forced to have their picnic instead on the church lawn. "We ate," Petry later described, "in clammy silence."[12] The civil rights icon and future federal judge Constance Baker Motley, who grew up in New Haven, Connecticut, in the 1930s, recalled accompanying two white friends to a private beach in the neighboring town of Milford once as a teenager. Despite not being members, Motley's white friends went there often, and had never previously been stopped at the entrance. But with an African American in the group, "there was suddenly a membership requirement." The three returned to New Haven, Motley dripping in sweat and stewing in indignation, her white friends having learned an important Jim Crow lesson.[13]

Figure 1: *Outside Looking In*, Baltimore, 1953. Mamie Livingston and two friends staring into a whites-only swimming pool. Image provided by Jeff Wiltse. Courtesy of the Afro-American Newspapers Archives and Research Center, Baltimore

In the years following World War II, such experiences increasingly galvanized young African Americans to join the burgeoning Black freedom struggle. "[T]hat was my beginning," Randy Battle said of his participation in a protest against the segregation of a park in his hometown of

[12] Ann Petry, "My Most Humiliating Jim Crow Experience," *Negro Digest* 48 (1946): 63–64.
[13] Andrew W. Kahrl, *Free the Beaches: The Story of Ned Coll and the Battle for America's Most Exclusive Shoreline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 17.

Albany, Georgia, in 1963. "That's when I made my commitment."[14] In cities and small towns, Black teenagers led protests and formed organizations to fight to desegregate public pools, beaches, parks, and commercial amusements. These battles were, to be sure, about the right to play. But they were also about the right to enjoy the fruits of postwar prosperity and participate fully in public life. "From the perspective of youthful civil rights activists," historian Martha Biondi notes, "pools, beaches, and amusement parks represented leisure, class mobility, and youth culture—aspects of the so-called American Dream. The struggle to desegregate them was critical in determining who could visibly participate in and claim these categories."[15] For the postwar generation of Black Americans, the right to equal access to public outdoor spaces or commercial amusements, and to enjoy their leisure time how and where they pleased, became a struggle over the right to full participation in a society increasingly shaped and defined by its leisure and recreational activities. Far from being peripheral to the struggles over political rights and economic opportunity, leisure spaces became, in the 1950s and 1960s, a pivotal battleground in the struggle for equal rights under law and revealing index of whites' fears and anxieties over racial integration.

Legal Challenges

Along with direct action against whites-only spaces, civil rights organizations began filing lawsuits against cities that denied Blacks' access to taxpayer-supported facilities and failed to provide comparable amenities to African Americans. In the late 1940s, the NAACP successfully integrated public swimming pools in two New Jersey cities using this strategy. In Kansas City, Missouri, a group of three African Americans sued the city after being denied admission to a whites-only public pool in 1952. In response, some states, cities, and towns scrambled to create separate facilities for African Americans that, they hoped, would satisfy the courts and preserve the legal doctrine of "separate but equal." Driven by desperation and drenched in cynicism, white officials' attempts to designate areas for African American outdoor recreation did more to fuel than dissipate Black activism and demands for full integration. In South Carolina, local NAACP leaders engaged in fruitless negotiations with the state's Forestry Commission over the designation of a state park facility for African Americans in the Charleston area. After rejecting each of the state's proposals as woefully inadequate, in 1948 the NAACP sued to desegregate the whites-only Edisto State Park. In Oklahoma, state officials announced in 1952, plans to create a "luxurious resort lodge for Negroes" that would include a lodge that could hold 116 guests, cabins, a swimming pool, boat dock, and other amenities. But following the announcement, the state took little action to carry out the project, and by 1953, a delegation of Black leaders filed a formal protest with the state planning board. Writing on the eve of the 1954 *Brown* decision, the Southern Regional Council remarked that "[t]he attempt to maintain segregation in Southern state parks by building a network of exclusively Black parks promises at the outset to be an expensive and ultimately unsuccessful venture."[16] Following the *Brown* decision, it would be, to white segregationists at least, irrelevant.

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[14] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 167.
[15] Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).
[16] Southern Regional Council, "State Park for Negroes-Tests of Equality," *New South* 9, no. 4 & 5 (1954): 1.

By declaring segregation inherently unequal, the Supreme Court made clear that efforts to preserve Jim Crow through appropriations and cosmetic improvements to separate "colored" facilities would not pass constitutional muster. The *Brown* decision not only led, in some cases, to the immediate cessation of state and local expenditures on "colored" state parks (Oklahoma, for instance, abandoned plans for a new Black state park after the decision was announced), it also prompted attorneys in ongoing cases challenging segregation ordinances to change tactics. In Baltimore, Maryland, a case that stemmed from a 1950 incident at a city park would become the most pivotal decision dismantling Jim Crow in places of public recreation. On July 3, 1950, Black Baltimorean Robert M. Dawson Jr. and a group of friends were denied access to the city's whites-only Fort Smallwood Park. The following spring, Dawson filed suit against the city's parks and recreation department in U.S. District Court. That summer, the District Court enjoined the city from excluding Black people from the park because there was no comparable facility available to African Americans. In response, the city adopted a new policy of reserving the park exclusively for African Americans on certain days of the week, which satisfied the courts. Separately, a group of African Americans led by Milton Lonesome sued the state of Maryland after being denied admission to a state-owned beach and told to use a separate beach set aside for "colored" use. The colored beach, the plaintiffs argued, was "virtually unusable." Judge Calvin Chestnut agreed, ruling in June 1953 that the two facilities were unequal and ordered the whites-only beach to admit African Americans. But, after the state made improvements to the "colored" beach, he vacated the desegregation order. In both cases, white officials succeeded in staving off integration by demonstrating, to the court's satisfaction, that separate could be equal. Following the *Brown* decision, plaintiffs in both cases filed new appeals, asking the federal court for judgement on pleadings. The two cases were consolidated and, in March 1955, the Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the lower court's rulings and held that the city and state could not maintain segregated park facilities. In November 1955, the US Supreme Court upheld the decision. In so doing, it extended the legal basis of the *Brown* decision regarding public schools to public recreational facilities.[17]

The ruling in *Dawson v. Baltimore* would soon extend to other ongoing cases challenging segregated public recreation. In Atlanta, Georgia, three African American men had sued the city after being denied access to one of the city's public golf courses in the summer of 1951. At the time, there were no public golf courses for "colored" use in the city. In July 1953, U.S. District Judge Boyd Slogan ruled in *Holmes v. City of Atlanta* that the city must admit Blacks to municipal courses but held that it could do so on a segregated basis, by setting aside certain days of the week for Black golfers. Following the *Brown* decision, the plaintiffs appealed the court's decision. "In view of the fact that non-segregation has been extended by the Supreme Court to public education and other fields," the head of the Atlanta NAACP's legal redress committee commented, "I feel it should be applied in the *Holmes* case as well." The U.S. Supreme Court agreed, and in November 1955 reversed a lower court decision that had upheld the city's segregation ordinance, ruling that the city could not deny the use of its municipal golf courses on the basis of race. The city complied with the federal court order, permitting African Americans to play on municipal courses, but closed the shower facilities in clubhouses. City officials in

[17] "Maryland: Dawson v. Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City (U.S.C.A., 4th Cir.)," *Race Relations Law Reporter* 1, no. 1 (1956): 162–164; "Maryland Appeals Court Ban Against Jim-Crow on Beaches," *Cleveland Call and Post*, July 30, 1955.

Atlanta tried to contain the fallout from the court's decision. Mayor William B. Hartsfield publicly insisted that the ruling only applied to the city's golf courses, even as it was apparent that the court had applied the same reasoning to golf courses in Atlanta as it had to beaches and swimming pools in Baltimore. The state's attorney general, Eugene Cook, said the ruling would lead to "violence and bloodshed," while its governor, Marvin Griffin, ominously predicted it would "result in the abandonment or disposal of such facilities," and later promised that "the state will get out of the park business before allowing a breakdown in segregation in the intimacy of the playground."[18]

Across the United States, lawsuits challenging segregated recreational facilities proliferated in the years following the *Brown* decision. In response, private operators and public officials employed a host of maneuvers and offered a variety of legal arguments in an attempt to preserve the racial status quo. In response to a lawsuit challenging its whites-only admission policy, the Boulevard Swimming and Tennis Club, located in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, claimed it was a private club, even as it advertised itself as open to the public and on hot summer days sold thousands of admission tickets. In some cases, parks and other facilities that were the targets of desegregation campaigns contained clauses in the deed forbidding its use by African Americans. In Charlotte, North Carolina, a white family bequeathed land for a state park with the stipulation that it would be maintained for whites only. When Blacks sued for admission, the state argued that it would have to revert ownership; the state Supreme Court agreed. Many privately owned public accommodations claimed that court-ordered desegregation would result in their financial ruin, an argument that, in *Moorhead v. City of Fort Lauderdale,* a federal judge flatly rejected as an invalid reason for denying constitutional rights.[19]

More than any other tactic, states and localities threatened with court-ordered desegregation embraced privatization as a strategy for preserving Jim Crow in outdoor recreation. Many cities and towns responded to Black protests and the threat of court-ordered desegregation by threatening, or attempting, to sell off its public parks, golf courses, and other recreational facilities to private entities, which, they hoped, could then reopen as private clubs for (white) members only. To circumvent court-ordered desegregation, Georgia leased nine of its state parks to private entities. In Montgomery, Alabama, city commissioners closed and announced plans to sell all of its city parks in response to a petition from the African American community seeking equal access. The parks would remain closed to the public until 1964. The grand public swimming pool in the center of Montgomery's city park was filled with dirt, covered with grass, and never reopened, a common fate for public swimming pools across the post-Jim Crow South. In Sarasota, Florida, county commissioners threatened to auction off all its public beaches to

[18] "Kentucky: Muir v. Louisville Park Theatrical Association," *Race Relations Law Reporter* 1, no. 1 (1956): 14–15; Special to Journal and Guide, "Court Keeps Races Apart; Opens Atlanta Golf Links: Seven City Courses Affected By Suit Trio May Appeal As Judge Confirms Right To Play But Allows City To Follow 'Segregated But Equal' Plan," *New Journal and* Guide, July 17, 1954; "Georgia Will Sidestep Court Decision Outlawing Segregation of Parks," *Jackson Daily News* (MS), November 9, 1955; "Mayor Says Ruling Affects Golf Only," *Atlanta Journal*, November 8, 1955; "Segregation Ban In Parks Decried," *New York Times*, November 9, 1955.

[19] "Pennsylvania: Everett v. Harron (Pa. Sup. Ct.)," *Race Relations Law Reporter* 1, no. 2 (1956): 366–370; North Carolina: Charlotte Park & Recreation Commission v. Barringer (N.C. Sup. Ct.)," *Race Relations Law Reporter* 1, no. 1 (1956): 164–169; "North Carolina: Leeper v. Charlotte Park & Recreation Comm (N.C. Sup. Ct)," *Race Relations Law Reporter* 2, no. 2 (1957): 411–412.

private operators after Black citizens launched a desegregation campaign. In response to a 1959 lawsuit seeking the desegregation of the city's parks, golf courses, and swimming pools, white officials in Birmingham, Alabama, slashed the city's parks and recreation budget by 80 percent and closed all facilities named in the lawsuit. The city commission later voted to close all 67 of its parks, eight swimming pools, and four golf courses before it would submit to desegregation.[20]

Figure 2: Protestors attempt to enter an all-white swimming pool classified for "members only." Cairo, Illinois, 1962. Photographed by Danny Lyons. Courtesy of Danny Lyons via Magnum Photos, Inc.

Invariably, southern state courts went along with these legal farces. In 1956, city officials in Greensboro, North Carolina, sold the Lindley Park Swimming Pool after a group of African Americans sued the city for refusing them entry. The state Supreme Court ruled that, since the pool was now privately owned, no unconstitutional discrimination could occur, and dismissed the plaintiffs' suit. In 1958, the Florida Supreme Court affirmed that the city of Fort Lauderdale could sell a city-owned golf course to a private association rather than admit Blacks.[21]

[20] "9 Georgia Parks Are Leased To Citizens To Safeguard Segregation and Save Money," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 15, 1956; "City Will Close Parks; School Mixing Bid Set," *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 31, 1958; "Board Threaten to Sell Beaches," *St. Petersburg Times* [Florida], October 25, 1955; Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 169.

[21] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 160–161; "Florida: Griffis v. City of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla Sup Ct," *Race Relations Law Reporter* 3, no. 4 (1958): 686–687.

While the burgeoning civil rights movement was national in scope, local incidents, issues, and concerns fueled organizing and sparked protests. This was especially the case with the fight to desegregate recreational facilities. Across the South, many direct actions to desegregate whites-only public beaches, parks, and pools grew out of local Blacks' frustrations with the lack of viable recreational options for families and children. In Sarasota, Florida, a group of 100 African Americans staged a "beach party" on the city's Lido Beach in the fall of 1955 to protest the city's failure to provide a safe and accessible swimming area for Black residents.[22]

Black Demands and White Resistance

For the Black parents of young children, in particular, the absence of safe, supervised places of play was a main concern, no more so than in the summer, Jim Crow's deadliest season. Each year, shockingly high numbers of African American children drowned or caught dangerous infections while playing in dangerous, often polluted, waters. Their deaths and illnesses were a direct result of segregation ordinances that barred Blacks from enjoying public swimming pools, parks, and playgrounds, and of local governments' refusal to expend even minimal tax dollars toward providing recreational facilities for Black communities.

By the 1950s, the tragic, and preventable, drowning deaths of Black youth increasingly became the spark that lit local campaigns for recreational desegregation. In Baltimore, two separate drowning incidents in the summer of 1953 that claimed the lives of three Black youth led the NAACP to join in the lawsuit challenging the city's segregation policies in its swimming pools that ultimately culminated in the *Dawson* decision. In Monroe, North Carolina, local NAACP chapter president Robert Williams launched a campaign to desegregate the city's swimming pool (which had been built with federal dollars) after the drowning death of a Black youth in a nearby lake in 1957. After the city ignored his demands, Williams and groups of Black youth staged demonstrations at the whites-only pool for four straight summers, provoking hostile and increasingly violent responses from whites and leading the city to close the pool in 1961.[23]

In Monroe and elsewhere, the militant actions and uncompromising stances of Black teenagers, parents, and local activists stood in contrast to the timidity of national civil rights organizations on the issue of recreational equality. Because it involved spaces that brought white and Black bodies into close proximity, national organizations like the NAACP were particularly reluctant to move the issue of beach and swimming pool segregation to the forefront of the wider struggle. It took the daring actions of local activists to move it there. In Mississippi, a local campaign to desegregate the Biloxi beachfront launched in 1959 without any initial involvement from the state or national NAACP "marked the beginning of a new, public, and confrontational phase for the civil rights movement" in the state.[24] That summer, Gilbert Mason, a local Black physician, and seven other African Americans, including five children, went swimming in the Gulf of Mexico along the city's beachfront. A white police officer noticed the group and ordered them to leave. Mason proceeded to the police station and inquired about the ordinance that prohibited

[22] "Negro Dip In Gulf Not Illegal," *Miami Herald*, September 30, 1955.
[23] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 116–117, 162–163.
[24] James Patterson Smith, "Local Leadership, the Biloxi Beach Riot, and the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, 1959–1964," in *Sunbelt Revolution: The Historical Progression of the Civil Rights Struggle in the Gulf South, 1866-2000*, ed. Samuel C. Hyde Jr. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 210.

Blacks from using the beach. As was the case in most southern localities, Biloxi had not bothered to adopt a segregation statute for the beach or other public facilities but instead relied on fear and intimidation, or what whites euphemistically called "custom," to enforce Black exclusion. The police officer on hand accused Mason of attempting to create a disturbance, claimed the law was locked in a safe, and said he could not produce it until the following morning. Mason returned to the police station the following morning, where he was met by the city's mayor, who accused Mason of collaborating with the NAACP, and, failing to produce the law Mason supposedly violated, simply warned, "If you go back down there again we're going to arrest you. That's all there is to it." Later, the county's Board of Supervisors claimed that the beach was, in fact, private property. Beachfront property owners, they asserted, owned "the beach and water from the shore line extending out 1500 feet."[25]

In seeking to defend the old Jim Crow model of segregating public spaces, white officials in Biloxi anticipated and embraced what would, in many instances, come to replace it: privatization. Across the United States, white officials and privileged communities responded to campaigns and individual attempts to open public spaces and accommodations to the general public by selling off public assets to private entities, narrowing the definition of who constituted the public, or, in Biloxi's case, reinterpreting ancient legal doctrines. The public trust doctrine defines the foreshore as public land, a legal principle that dates back to the Roman era and was incorporated into American jurisprudence from English common law at the founding of the republic. Prior to Mason's attempts to enjoy the beach, Mississippi case law had drawn the line separating public land (the beach) from private property at the median high tide and had granted the (white) public broad powers to access, traverse, and enjoy the state's shoreline. For white Mississippians, at least, the beach was treated as a commons. In order to secure federal funding to rebuild the shoreline following a devastating hurricane in 1947, the Mississippi state legislature passed an act that explicitly assured "perpetual public ownership of the beach and its administration for public use only."[26] But as African Americans claimed those same rights to public lands, private property owners and local governments increasingly sought to move the line further out into the sea and restrict access. As discussed in the next chapter, the privatization of public space became one of the chief instruments of racial and class segregation in northern states, and one of the key legal issues shaping the struggle against exclusionary practices used by suburbs and other predominantly white communities to limit African Americans' access to outdoor recreational amenities.

The fight to desegregate beaches was thus also a fight for the public's right to public land. In Mississippi, decades of case law not only recognized that the foreshore belonged to the public, a 1953 civil engineering project that had rebuilt and reshaped the shoreline had been funded with federal tax dollars, thus bolstering the case for African Americans' rights to unrestricted access. This, too, would emerge as a central legal argument and strategy employed by the burgeoning Open Beaches Movement a decade later.[27]

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[25] J. Michael Butler, "The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission and Beach Integration, 1959–1963: A Cotton-Patch Gestapo?," *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 1 (2002): 114–115.
[26] Butler, "The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission and Beach Integration, 1959–1963," 142.
[27] See Kahrl, *Free the Beaches.*

In October 1959, Mason, Joseph Austin, and Eulice White presented the board of supervisors with a petition demanding "unrestrained use of the beach." In it, they pointed out that no law prohibited Blacks from using the beach, that public funds had been expended on its creation and maintenance, and as such, Blacks had every right to enjoy it unobstructed. During the public hearing, Mason rejected out of hand local officials' proposal to create a separate "colored" section of the beach, underscoring just how rapidly the Black freedom movement had traveled in the years since the *Brown* decision, when threats to integrate whites-only spaces were often issued in order to secure separate "colored" spaces of their own. Black people, Mason responded, did not want the county to provide a "colored" beach. They demanded the right to enjoy "all twenty-six miles" of oceanfront. "[E]very damn inch of it." During the hearing, White pointed out that, prior to the 1953 engineering project that had vastly improved the shoreline for public use, African Americans *had* enjoyed unobstructed rights to the shore. It was only after the beach became a desirable destination and public commodity that public officials enforced Black exclusion. Board members rejected the petition, and the Black delegation were all subject to intimidation and harassment in the days and weeks that followed. The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, a state agency formed in 1955 to suppress civil rights activities, surveilled and applied pressure to those who signed the petition. At least three of its signatories were fired from their jobs by white employers. In private correspondence with MSSC investigators, local law enforcement recommended they "beat the hell out of any negro found on the beach."[28]

On Easter Sunday, April 17, 1960, Mason returned to the beach and swam in the Gulf alone. Thirty minutes into his swim, police arrived and arrested Mason on charges of disorderly conduct. Within days of Mason's arrest, local Black leaders mobilized plans for a mass demonstration the following weekend. The following Sunday, April 24, Mason led a group of nearly 125 Black men, women, and children in a wade-in on Biloxi's public beachfront. It was the first nonviolent direct action protest in a state that would become, in the coming years, the epicenter of the civil rights movement. In the days leading up to the demonstration, local police actively encouraged whites to attack peaceful protesters, and later stood idly by as a mob wielding chains, clubs, lead pipes, whips, and other weapons descended on the group. Whites indiscriminately assailed elderly men and women and children before driving the protesters from the shore. White violence soon spread into the city's Black neighborhoods and continued into the evening. White gunmen fired indiscriminately into Black-owned businesses and at random passersby from moving vehicles. All told, eight African Americans and two whites suffered gunshot wounds, including two Black women who were shot while sitting on a park bench. At least fifteen people sustained serious injuries at the hands of the white mob. Five years before Selma, the tragic events that transpired on Biloxi's beachfront that Easter became known as "Bloody Sunday." The assaults attracted national and international attention and condemnation. The *New York Times* called it the "worst racial riot in Mississippi history."[29] Contrary to white segregationists' fevered imaginations, it was done without any outside assistance or coordination with national organizations. "Mason and his followers," the historian J. Michael Butler notes,

[28] Kahrl, *Free the Beaches*, 107–48, 119.
[29] "N.A.A.C.P. DENIES BILOXI RIOT ROLE: Replies to Charge by City Leader—Toll Is 10 Shot, Many Hurt in Fights," *New York Times*, April 26,1960.

"simply responded to local conditions tactics and methods that best suited their needs in the given situation[.]"[30]

Biloxi's Bloody Sunday led to the formation of a local chapter of the NAACP and the launch of a voter registration drive that challenged the state's notorious disenfranchisement laws. Nationally, the assault on African Americans seeking simply to enjoy a day at the beach compelled national civil rights organizations to move the issue of recreational segregation to the front of its agenda. In the wake of the attack, NAACP secretary Roy Wilkins called on all members to engage in acts of civil disobedience on segregated beaches and parks during the upcoming summer of 1960. Such demonstrations, Wilkins proclaimed, aimed to "proclaim … our determination not to forego any of our constitutional rights."[31] It also compelled the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice to take action. On May 17, 1960, it filed suit in federal court against local officials in Harrison County. In the suit, it listed all of the federal appropriations toward the county's beachfront and local officials' written agreement to use the funds to provide a sand beach for public use, which, Justice Department lawyers argued, they were in violation of. It marked the first time the federal government had used the appropriation of federal dollars to enforce equal access to public recreational amenities.[32]

Across the United States that summer, groups large and small attempted to desegregate public recreational grounds. In Mississippi, a group of 80 African Americans ventured to the DeSoto National Forest for a picnic. As federal property, the forest was legally opened to all, but until then, no group of African Americans had attempted to access it. Shortly after the group arrived, a white sheriff ordered the area closed and expelled all park users. In Florida, two separate groups of protesters made two attempts to desegregate Tomoka State Park. In South Carolina, a group of three African Americans attempted a wade-in at Myrtle Beach State Park. In suburban Maryland, a group of young activists led by Stokely Carmichael (aka Kwame Ture), Cleveland Sellers, and Lawrence Henry attempted to integrate the Glen Echo Amusement Park in June. One reporter captured an image of a white security guard attempting to remove a Black protester from the merry-go-round. For the next five weeks, protesters picketed outside the park's gates. By summer's end, police arrested over 40 activists. In Georgia, a group of African American students from Savannah State College staged a wade-in at one of Savannah's public beaches. As was the case in Biloxi the previous summer, local law enforcement quickly realized that the town had neglected to adopt a segregation ordinance on its beach. It instead charged the students with disorderly conduct and disrobing in public. Weeks later, another group of students active in the local NAACP chapter staged a second wade-in at the beach. After the group swam for an hour, police arrived and ordered the entire beach area closed. After the group exited the area, police officers followed them in their vehicle and arrested the group's leader, Amos Brown, for a minor

[30] "NAACP Counsel Goes To Defend Biloxi Victims," *Daily Defender* [Chicago, IL], May 4, 1960; Butler, "The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission and Beach Integration, 1959–1963," 132.
[31] O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*, 139.
[32] Butler, "The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission and Beach Integration, 1959–1963," 138.

traffic violation. In July, forty members of the interracial Ann Arbor (Michigan) Direct Action Committee staged a "stand-in" at the all-white Newport Beach Club on Portage Lake.[33]

Figure 3: Marvous Saunders prior to his arrest by Sheriff Deputy Francis Collins for violating the park's whites-only policy at Glen Echo Park, June 30, 1960. Photographed by Ranny Routt. Courtesy of the D.C. Public Library Washington Star Collection © Washington Post

Attempts to desegregate outdoor recreation spaces in the summer of 1960 culminated on the shores of Lake Michigan in Chicago, the city that millions of African Americans had migrated to in search of freedom from the racism of the Deep South. Rainbow Beach, on the city's South Side, was one of dozens of public beaches along the city's shoreline ostensibly open to all but, in practice, off-limits to Blacks. Since the 1919 Race Riot, and in spite of the changing racial demographics of the surrounding neighborhoods, Black Chicagoans had studiously avoided

[33] O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 139; Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 170, 182–183; "No Incidents As Students Swim At 'White' Ga. Beach: "Wade In" Staged At Savannah Township Police Find No Charges That Could Be Made," *New Journal and Guide* [Norfolk, VA], August 27, 1960; "'Speeding' Arrest Made After Wade-In In Georgia: Staffer Of NAACP Is Taken In 'We'll Not Violate Your Rights' Police Tell Former Student*," New Journal and Guide* [Norfolk, VA], September 17, 1960; "Michigan Group Launches Beach 'Stand-In': Close Area To Block Integration Attempt," *Daily Defender* [Chicago, IL], August 24, 1960.

entering beaches and parks whites claimed for themselves. That summer, Black police officer Harold Carr and his family were attacked by a gang of rock-throwing white youth when they attempted to use the beach. Following the attack, members of the South Side NAACP Youth Council decided to stage a wade-in at the beach. Calling themselves "Freedom Waders," the group of white and Black youth arrived at Rainbow Beach on August 28, 1960, and unfurled blankets on the sand. Within two hours, a mob of whites had formed and surrounded the group. As the Freedom Waders sang "We Shall Overcome," the mob began pelting them with rocks. Twenty-one-year-old Velma Murphy Hill was struck in the head. Police eventually arrived and allowed the group to escape the mob; Murphy Hill was transported to an area hospital, where she received 17 stitches in her head. A photo of Murphy Hill's partially shaved head showing her injuries appeared on the front page of the *Chicago Defender.*[34]

Direct actions against segregated beaches, parks, and pools continued into the summer of 1961. In cities across the South, spontaneous wade-ins by groups of Black teenagers took place at city-owned swimming pools, followed by local officials ordering the pools closed for the remainder of the summer. Even as it furthered a national and increasingly global movement, the nature and location of direct actions grew out of longstanding local struggles. In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Black community leaders had demanded for years that county officials provide African Americans with a beach of their own. These demands grew more urgent in 1953 after a white beachfront owner who had set aside a portion of his large tract for Black use sold his land to developers, who subsequently closed it to the public, removing the lone section of beachfront in the county Blacks could use. The following year, Broward County designated a remote stretch of shore as a "colored" beach. Inaccessible by road, the site's glaring inadequacies only fueled Black demands for equality. Officials tried to quell unrest with empty promises of a road and bridge project that would connect the site to the mainland. By the summer of 1961, with those promises still unfulfilled, leaders in the local NAACP chapter joined the nationwide campaign, staging a series of "wade-ins" on Fort Lauderdale's popular beachfront, where they were met by growing crowds of angry whites, members of the Ku Klux Klan in full regalia, and local police, who arrested demonstrators for "disturbing the peace."[35]

In Chicago, the attack on black beachgoers at Rainbow Beach in late summer 1960 inspired civil rights activists to continue their attempts to desegregate the shoreline the following summer. On the weekend of July 7 and 8, 1961, Chicago's "freedom waders" resumed their peaceful demonstrations, this time with over 200 police officers on hand and an estimated crowd of 10,000 counter-protesters and onlookers. Intent on preventing more negative headlines for the city, police arrested and charged nine whites with disorderly conduct. The demonstrations continued throughout the summer, with police on hand to prevent any escalation of violence.[36]

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[34] "Rainbow Beach 'wade-Ins' Broke down Racial Barrier," *Chicago Tribune*, July 10, 2011, https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2011-07-10-ct-met-rainbow-beach-20110710-story.html; Adolph J. Slaughter, "Stage 'Wade-In' At Segregated Chicago Beach: Police Prevent Trouble At Tense Rainbow Beach," *The Chicago Defender*, September 17, 1960.

[35] William G. Crawford Jr., "The Long Hard Fight for Equal Rights: A History of Broward County's Colored Beach and the Fort Lauderdale Beach 'Wade-Ins' of the Summer of 1961," *Tequesta* 67 (2007): 19–51.

[36] "Race Waders Back; 9 Seized: Oppose Integration of Rainbow Beach," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 10, 1961.

In Mississippi, civil rights activists continued to wage direct actions on Biloxi's segregated beachfront while challenging the county's claim that the shoreline constituted private property in federal court. As the summer of 1963 approached, Mason and local organizers worked alongside NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers on a third wade-in. Days before the protest was set to take place, Evers was assassinated in his driveway in Jackson. His death framed the subsequent protest, as activists marched solemnly past police wearing pith helmets and carrying tear gas guns. Behind them stood a mob of over 2,000 whites, who, unable to break through police lines, proceeded to instead slash tires, break antennas, and vandalize civil rights protesters' cars.[37]

In the short term, violent white racism worked. In cities and states targeted by peaceful protesters, public officials repeatedly invoked concerns about public order and safety to argue for Blacks' exclusion and, later, to justify closing public facilities entirely. In Florida, Governor Leroy Collins signed a bill in 1959 that gave local sheriffs the authority to close any public beach, park, or recreational facility "when in his discretion conditions exist which present a clear and present or probable threat of violence, danger or disorder, or at any time a disorderly situation exists which in his opinion warrants such action."[38] By the early 1960s, as federal courts ordered states and localities to desegregate and activists staged public demonstrations, "closed" signs became a familiar sight at public pools and city and state parks across the South. After a federal appeals court ruled in 1955 that the state of Virginia could not evade court-ordered desegregation by leasing Seashore State Park to a private individual, the state's governor and Department of Conservation and Development closed the state park entirely. It would remain closed to the public for the next eight years. After a group of Black youth jumped into a segregated public pool in Lynchburg, Virginia, in the summer of 1961, the city closed all pools for the remainder of the summer. Similar protests in Nashville and Memphis, Tennessee that summer generated the same response from city officials. When the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) launched its ill-fated campaign to desegregate the city of Albany, Georgia, in 1962, the city responded by promptly closing its public parks and libraries. In South Carolina, the state forestry commission ordered all state parks closed effective September 8, 1963, the date federal courts had ordered all parks in the state desegregated.[39]

As southern states and localities waged "massive resistance" to court-ordered desegregation, a small but growing number of white southerners began to express misgivings. In South Carolina, white residents expressed mixed reactions to the state's decision to close state parks. In public meetings held across the state following the announcement, majorities in several communities expressed opposition to closing and support for re-opening on a desegregated basis. A former Forestry Commission member openly questioned the wisdom of closing state parks rather than complying with court orders. "[W]e should not close our parks and thus abandon a wonderful resource because of fears which may never materialize."[40] In Virginia, one white resident urged the state's governor to re-open its state parks on a desegregated basis in the interest of economic

[37] Butler, "The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission and Beach Integration, 1959–1963," 140–141.
[38] "Collins Signs Segregation Measure," *St. Petersburg Times* [Florida], June 1959.
[39] "Virginia Loses State Park Case: Supreme Court Upholds Decision Against Race Bias In Resort Lease," *The Washington Post and Times Herald* [Washington, DC], October 9, 1956; O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*, 131–132, 135; Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 27.
[40] O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*, 142.

development. If Virginia is to become attractive to new businesses and residents, he argued, it must first shed "a reputation of still living in the 19th century."[41]

While fighting to desegregate white spaces, activists and organizers often utilized the separate Black spaces created under Jim Crow for meetings, gatherings, and community building. The Gulfside Assembly (Resort, ocean), founded by Black Methodists in the 1920s as a seaside retreat and campground for African American families in Waveland, Mississippi, became a de facto organizing center for civil rights groups in the early 1960s. NAACP attorneys Constance Baker Motley and Thurgood Marshall, among others, prepared to argue cases in southern courtrooms against segregated education there. Gulfside hosted Freedom Schools for African American children from coastal counties during 1964's Freedom Summer, and in November served as a retreat for members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. "Only at Waveland," civil rights worker and SNCC member Mary King remembered, "was it possible for a racially integrated group to stay together and not trigger violence in Mississippi." It was, Gulfside alum Jerry Ruth Williams recalled, "a place where integrated groups could meet and plan without the threat of being jailed."[42] The very survival strategies Black-owned resorts and retreats had employed to fend off white attacks under Jim Crow made these sites ideal locations for clandestine meetings during the most tumultuous days of the movement. For decades, Gulfside's leadership had outwardly accommodated Jim Crow and strove to appear deferential to local whites. As a result, when investigators for the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission fanned across the state's coastline during the Biloxi wade-ins seeking to uncover pockets of Black resistance, they gave Gulfside only a glancing look. Local white officials, MSSC investigator Robert C. Thomas wrote, feel as if Gulfside "is a very good thing" and it had "never [been] out of line in the least bit."[43]

The right to enjoy outdoor recreational spaces was inextricably bound to the right to travel and vacation freely. As local communities staged protests and launched campaigns to desegregate beaches, parks, and commercial amusements, national organizations fought to ensure that Black families could enjoy their leisure time by traveling without fear of harassment, exclusion, and humiliation. While the building of the interstate highway system made travel safer for Black motorists, saving them from having to venture along remote state roads and backways and through unfamiliar towns, the national, corporately owned hotels and restaurants that proliferated in the post-World War II era proved no more hospitable to Black travelers than the small businesses that routinely denied services to Black families on the road. But because of their national reach, and sensitivity to bad publicity, hotel and restaurant chains proved particularly susceptible to targeted civil rights campaigns. In 1962, CORE launched a campaign to desegregate roadside eateries, specifically targeting the Howard Johnson's that had become ubiquitous along America's highways and had demonstrated a consistent pattern of

[41] O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion* 140.
[42] Patricia Adelkan, "'Understanding Racism': Local Educator Reflects On 'One-Of-A-Kind' Conference," *Sacramento Observer*, March 10, 1999; Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 217.
[43] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 216.

discrimination against African Americans. That same year, the NAACP launched a pressure campaign against the Hilton Hotel chain over its exclusionary practices.[44]

During the Congressional hearings and debates over what would become the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act, the plight of Black travelers emerged as a common theme in the testimony civil rights leaders offered to lawmakers. Before the Senate Committee on Congress in July 1963, NAACP Secretary Roy Wilkins described the experience of vacationing while Black in Jim Crow America. Unlike white Americans, Black families could not simply pack up the car and hit the road, Wilkins explained. They had to take into account questions like, "Where and under what conditions can you and your family eat? Where can they use a rest room? Can you stop driving after a reasonable day behind the wheel or must you drive until you reach a city where relatives or friends will accommodate you and yours for the night? Will your children be denied a soft drink or an ice cream cone because you are not white?"[45] His and others' testimonies centered on the discriminations Black families faced from hotels and restaurants as they sought to enjoy one of the hallmarks of middle-class life in postwar America: the summer vacation. That Black families faced harassment and humiliation in these moments, historian Susan Sessions Rugh notes, "was offered as persuasive evidence of the need for a federal law to ensure the rights of all citizens. Framing the experience of travel into a family narrative was essential to engendering sympathy for the civil rights struggle."[46]

Ultimately, white violence toward peaceful protestors seeking to access public recreational spaces provided the final push toward passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In the spring of 1964, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference joined forces with local organizers in St. Augustine, Florida, for a major campaign targeting public spaces and accommodations in the coastal city. Activists poured in from across the nation. Prominent figures including Jackie Robinson lent support. In June 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested for attempting to desegregate the restaurant at the Monson Motor Lodge. A week later, two whites who had checked into the motel and five Black youth staged an impromptu wade-in in the motel's swimming pool. In response, the hotel's manager dumped containers of muriatic acid into the water. Newspapers across the country and around the world ran horrific images of the hotel manager casually dumping acid into the pool while the bathers screamed in terror.[47] Days later, white mobs descended on integrated group bathers as they staged wade-ins on the city's beach, injuring dozens. By nightfall, hundreds of white supremacists descended on a peaceful civil rights march, attacking peaceful protesters, with local law enforcement by whites' side. Nineteen people were hospitalized. None of the white assailants were charged.

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[44] Susan Sessions Rugh, *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 85–86.
[45] Rugh, *Are We There Yet?*, 68.
[46] Rugh, *Are We There Yet?*, 69.
[47] Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 167; "Demonstrators Beaten in Florida: Rall yat Slave Market Promist to Return," *The Washington Post, Times Herald* [Washington, DC], June 23, 1964.

Figure 4: Civil Rights Demonstrators Escorted from the Beach in Biloxi, Mississippi. June 23. 1963. Photographed by Jim Bourdier. Courtesy of the Associated Press, AP Photo

White southerners had exhausted all rationalizations and justifications for preserving segregation. All that remained was brute and capricious violence, terror, and cruelty, none of which proved effective in cowing Black people and their white allies into submission any longer. The nation took notice. The day after the acid attack at the motel, the U.S. Senate formally ended a 60-day filibuster and passed the 1964 Civil Rights bill. On July 2, 1964, one week after the mob attack in St. Augustine, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law.[48]

National corporate chains like Howard Johnson and Hilton were among the first to comply with the provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act ordering the desegregation of public accommodations. Many locally owned white businesses remained defiant and attempted to test the law's reach. Unlike corporate chains, they argued that their narrow profit margins meant that integration would spell their demise. The white owner of a beach resort and amusement park in Maryland testified before Congress that the provisions of the Civil Rights Act would "destroy my business." The manager of a hotel in Florida said that, if forced to admit Blacks, "I would kiss away a thousand dollars a year right there."[49] The threat desegregation posed to small businesses, and their rights as property owners (to discriminate), became a rallying cry for civil rights opponents. The first major legal challenge to the 1964 Civil Rights Act came from the white owner of the Heart of Atlanta Motel, who argued that the Act's ban on racial discrimination in public accommodations exceeded the authority of the Commerce Clause of the Constitution and violated his rights under the Fifth Amendment to choose customers and operate

[48] "The Forgotten Wade-ins that transformed the US," *Vox,* accessed February 22, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wk0872XhnHk.
[49] Rugh, *Are We There Yet?*, 81.

his business as he pleased. The U.S. Supreme Court rejected these arguments, ruling in December 1964 that hotels fell squarely under the authority of the interstate commerce clause and could not discriminate on the basis of race. The ruling in *Heart of Atlanta Hotel v. U.S.* became a landmark decision affirming the legal structure of the Civil Rights Act as a whole.[50]

Even as hotels, restaurants, and places of public leisure and amusement could no longer legally deny access to Black Americans, in the years following passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, African American travelers and pleasure seekers proceeded with caution and wariness when entering formerly whites-only spaces. Because they adopted blanket policies governing all of its franchises, national chains built a following and loyalty among Black customers in the period following desegregation, when many locally owned white establishments continued to discriminate against Black customers and guests.

By the mid-1960s, southern states had begun to retreat from massive resistance and quietly accede to court-ordered demands to desegregate public outdoor spaces and facilities. In 1962, Tennessee's governor signed, without fanfare, an executive order desegregating its state park system. The following year, Virginia desegregated its state parks in the most inconspicuous way possible. "The superintendents were merely notified not to deny colored use," the state's park director noted. Florida park officials, similarly, circulated a memo to park operators in 1963 instructing them not to deny Black users entry, but did not clarify or publicize its new policy until the following year. Mississippi state park officials tried to preserve racial "customs" after formal desegregation, continuing to refer to Carver Point State Park as its "colored" or "Negro" park in brochures until quietly dropping the adjective from its publications in 1967. Even as it desegregated other state parks, Virginia's Seashore State Park, the subject of a federal lawsuit, remained closed until finally reopening in 1967.[51]

Following the 1964 Civil Rights Act and in the face of federal court orders to desegregate, many cities and towns across the South closed all public swimming pools. Acting out of spite as much as fiscal expediency, many cities also closed down separate "colored" beaches and pools that had been created in order to preserve Jim Crow but had also become vital and cherished community spaces for Black communities. This was the case in New Orleans, where the white operators of Lincoln Beach (Beach; Amusement Park) terminated its lease immediately following the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the site abruptly closed. It did at the same moment as the city's mayor ordered all public places of recreation closed, ostensibly to avoid racial conflict. The measures combined to leave Black New Orleanians without any place for families and children to safely swim and cool off during the sweltering summer months. As expected, drowning deaths among Black youth spiked during the 1964 summer.[52]

Many middle-class whites responded to the desegregation of public parks, golf courses, and swimming pools by retreating into privatized spaces in fast-growing suburban enclaves. Private swimming pools and country clubs proliferated across suburban America, providing its members

[50] Gretchen Sorin, *Driving While Black: African American Travel and the Road to Civil Rights* (New York: Liveright, 2020), 260; "Georgia: Heart of Atlanta v. US, USSC," *Race Relation Law Reporter* 9, no. 4 (1964): 1650–1651.
[51] O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*, 145–147.
[52] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 223. Lincoln Beach remains vacant nearly six decades after its closing.

a means of evading integration. In Atlanta, historian Kevin Kruse notes, the desegregation of public parks and swimming pools "went smoothly not because whites accepted the decision, but because they had decided … to flee from these desegregated spaces." "In the end," Kruse adds, "court-ordered desegregation of public spaces brought about not actual integration, but instead a new division in which the public world was increasingly abandoned to blacks and a new private one was created for whites."[53] As white use of public parks and facilities plummeted, white taxpayer support soon followed, and public neglect ensued. The consequences of that abandonment would be felt most acutely among urban Black populations and would fuel the unrest that would engulf American cities in the years that followed.

[53] Kruse, *White Flight*, 107, 123.

Chapter Five

Parks Are for the People: The Struggle for Recreational Equality in the Postwar Metropolis (1945–1980)

A mother watches from a kitchen window as her children play on a swing set in their backyard. A group of kids race down a sidewalk on their bicycles, past rows of newly built ranch homes. A family piles into a station wagon for a Saturday afternoon drive along a parkway, or a hike in a nearby nature preserve.

These are some of the images associated with life in post-World War II U.S. suburbs. All of this was made possible by massive public investment, and all of it was denied to the vast majority of Black American families. Excluded from booming suburban housing markets, denied access to federally insured mortgages, forced to pay exorbitant rents to rapacious slumlords to live in crumbling structures in disinvested ghettos, urban Black populations saw their living conditions deteriorate in direct proportion to the opportunities and expanded horizons middle-class whites enjoyed in postwar America. Federally funded "slum clearance" projects functioned, in the writer James Baldwin's words, as a form of "Negro removal," leveling blocks and, in some cases, entire Black neighborhoods in the interest of spurring commercial reinvestment and real estate development in central cities. Urban Black neighborhoods also disproportionately became the sites for new interstate highways that connected suburbs to cities. In the process, these new highways, which one critic described as "white roads through black bedrooms," reinforced racial boundaries and Black ghettoization, increased air pollution levels, and diminished the health, safety, and quality of life of urban Black populations.[1]

This dynamic, and its impact on urban Black communities' recreational opportunities, was best exemplified in a ceremony for a new playground in the historically Black neighborhood of Overtown in Miami, Florida, in the summer of 1969. City officials, including local Black civic leaders, were on hand to cut the ribbon on a new playground located under the newly completed I-95 expressway. Like many interstate highway projects of the postwar era, the construction of I-95 tore right through the heart of the city's Black business and residential district and resulted in the mass displacement of thousands of Black residents. It did so in order to promote economic growth among the city's white-dominated industries and lower travel times for white Miamians, tourists, and vacationers. As a consolation, the remaining Black residents of the hollowed-out Overtown neighborhood received a set of swing-sets and see-saws for their kids to play on while cars and trucks sped overhead. Even this and other modest allocations of public funds for outdoor recreation space only came after several long, hot summers of racial unrest across urban America.[2] Labeled by the media as "riots" but more properly understood as rebellions against structural racism, the mass uprisings that spread across cities in the 1960s were fueled, in part, by the recreational deprivations ghettoized urban African Americans were forced to endure.

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[1] B. Drummond Ayres Jr., "'White Roads through Black Bedrooms,'" *New York Times,* December 31, 1967.
[2] N. D. B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 1–2.

Figure 1: *Under Expressway Park*, 1969. Courtesy of The Black Archives History and Research Foundation Of South Florida, Inc., The Miami-Dade Model City Program Records, 1968-2004, visit, http://www.bahlt.org.

During these decades, African Americans not only fought for public investment in urban parks, playgrounds, and recreational programs. They also worked to reimagine and reinvigorate urban outdoor spaces in the face of white abandonment and disinvestment, and made the fight for outdoor recreation a key component of the broader struggle for Black Power. Urban beaches and swimming pools that, only years earlier, whites had fought to keep segregated became summertime havens for working-class Black parents and children and places where Black visions of social and political empowerment and community control were enacted. Neighborhood groups turned abandoned lots into pocket parks and community gardens. Teenagers and young men swept broken glass and litter from the asphalt of basketball courts for pick-up games. These urban oases nourished new forms of recreational, athletic, and cultural expression and sustained Black communities in the face of mounting and overlapping social and economic challenges. Just as the forms of institutional racism and neglect that defined the post-World War II metropolis fueled Black demands for power rather than mere civil rights, the recreational spaces where urban Black communities congregated and pursued pleasure, as this chapter shows, offer revealing insights into how Black Power was put into practice through Black people's daily lives and struggles.

Against this backdrop, the National Park Service took measures to respond to the recreational needs of underserved urban populations and address, for the first time, the alienation of Black Americans from the federal agency. Adopting the mantra "parks are for the people," the NPS embarked on an ambitious plan to create new national parks in urban areas and implement a series of programs aimed at connecting with a segment of the U.S. population whose recreational needs and interests had been ignored. The fate of these initiatives, like the environmental and recreational conditions of American cities as a whole, would be bound up with the larger social, political, and economic ruptures of this era.

Greening the Suburbs and Neglecting the Cities

The New Deal put in motion the rise of a suburban, homeowner nation, and laid the groundwork for the massive expansion of the middle-class in the postwar years. Federal programs such as the Federal Housing Administration and legislation such as the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 facilitated the mass exodus of people and capital from central cities. Federal policies toward parks and recreation funding provided further incentives for families and businesses to relocate to suburbia. In 1958, Congress established the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, which was charged with compiling an inventory of areas in need of recreational resources in America. The commission's mandate explicitly excluded urban areas from consideration in favor of rural and suburban populations.[3] In the coming years, Congress passed a series of legislation that targeted new suburban developments. The 1961 Federal Housing Act established the Open Space Land Program, which provided financial help to communities to acquire and develop parks.[4] In 1962, President Kennedy established the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR), a division of the Department of the Interior, charged with assessing the nation's recreation needs and resources and helping to coordinate with states and municipalities on the acquisition and development of recreation lands.[5] In 1965, Congress passed the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (administered by the BOR), which provided grants to states and local governments to plan, acquire, and develop recreational projects.[6] All of these programs focused on conserving land and developing recreational areas in middle-class, predominantly white neighborhoods, in places virtually inaccessible to non-automobile owning families.

Collectively, federal recreation programs worked not only to enhance real estate values in predominantly white neighborhoods, but also to further entrench spatial divisions of wealth and

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[3] The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Act of 1958, Pub. L. No. 85–470, 72 Stat. 238. See also Diana R. Dunn, "Leisure Resources in America's Inner Cities," *Parks and Recreation* 9, no. 3 (1974): 34.

[4] United States Department of the Interior, *Urban Recreation: Report Prepared for the Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan by the Interdepartmental Work Group on Urban Recreation* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), 41.

[5] "Creation of Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission," Living Landscape Observer, September 15, 2014, accessed July 24, 2020, https://livinglandscapeobserver.net/creation-of-outdoor-recreation-resources-review-commission/.

[6] Commission on Marine Science, Engineering, and Resources, "Marine Resources and Legal-Political Arrangements for Their Development, Vol. 3, Panel Reports of the Commission on Marine Science, Engineering, and Resources" (Washington, DC: GPO, 1969), VII–242 (Hereafter Stratton Report). The report was authored by the Stratton Commission (named, like the Kerner Commission, after the commission's chair, former MIT president Julius Stratton); See also John A. Knauss, "The Stratton Commission—Its History and Its Legacy," *Oceanography* 3, no. 1 (1990): 53–55.

poverty in American cities. From 1962 to 1974, the Open Space Land Program helped American cities acquire 348,000 acres of urban open space through grants totaling $442 million, but through 1970, only six percent of these expenditures (or $17.7 million) went toward building or restoring parks in low-income urban neighborhoods.[7] In spending on water-based recreation, state governments disproportionately focused on developing areas and providing facilities (such as boating marinas) that bore few rewards, and had little relevance, to poor, urban communities. City governments, most still firmly in the grips of corrupt political machines, invariably channeled funds toward beautification projects in wealthier urban neighborhoods to stem the tide of white flight to the suburbs.[8] The benefits of the Land and Water Conservation Fund were, likewise, mostly enjoyed by wealthy and middle-class suburbs. The fund's benefits accrued disproportionately to the suburbanizing states of the South over the densely populated states of the Northeast and Rust Belt. Under the plan, 40 percent of the total funds were divided equally among each state, and of the remaining 60 percent, no state could receive more than seven percent of the total appropriation for the year. As a result, states such as Wyoming received $6.44 per citizen while New Jersey and New York received $1 and $1.26 per citizen, respectively. The federal formula for distributing funds within a given state also conspired against urban centers, distributing funds equally among counties. In Maryland, for example, the city of Baltimore received only 12 percent of the state's total funds, despite comprising 25 percent of the state's total population.[9] As cities' tax bases shrunk, fewer of them could even afford to meet the 50 percent matching fund requirement, further exacerbating the urban-suburban divide.[10]

State governments often channeled funds to suburban municipalities to develop and improve parks and beaches, increase property values, and fuel suburban growth.[11] In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for example, residents of the wealthy suburbs of Westmoreland County enjoyed on average 2,500 square feet of public outdoor recreational space per person, as compared to 750 square feet per person for residents of the urban Allegheny County. In Allegheny County, non-automobile owning families lacked any opportunity to enjoy their own 750 square feet, since none of the county's parks were accessible by public transportation.[12] Westmoreland County, like the suburban counties of Connecticut and Long Island, offered some of the best outdoor recreational amenities in the nation.[13] As a 1974 report on urban recreation by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) concluded, "Federal and State recreation assistance programs have contributed to [the disparities in public recreation] by increasing the

[7] Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Improvements Needed in Administration of Open-Space Land Program* (Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office, 1972), 5–6.
[8] Stratton Report, VII–246.
[9] R. Sargent Shriver, "Achieving Environmental Justice," in *Congress Highlights: 1972 Congress for Recreation and Parks, October 1-6, 1972, Anaheim, CA*, ed. Anita E. Leifer (Washington, DC: NRPA, 1973), 12–17.
[10] Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Urban Recreation Report: Prepared for the Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan by the Interdepartmental Work Group on Urban Recreation,* HUD-CD-41, 1974, 40.
[11] HUD*, Urban Recreation Report,* 14.
[12] HUD*, Urban Recreation Report,* 20.
[13] HUD, *Urban Recreation Report*, 21; The report listed the suburban counties of Fairfield, Connecticut, Westchester, New York, and Nassau, Long Island, as possessing three of the best recreation programs in the nation.

attractiveness of suburbs at the expense of central cities. It is … no accident that most Americans perceive the better life to be the exclusive offering of suburban municipalities."[14]

Historians of postwar America have shown how a combination of public policies and private practices worked to ensure that suburban housing markets remained exclusive to whites only. Less studied but equally significant is how newly formed suburban municipalities and older, wealthier, and predominantly white cities and towns located outside of the urban core also worked to keep Black people out of public outdoor spaces, using a variety of ostensibly race-neutral exclusionary measures. Along the northeastern corridor, many towns adopted ordinances restricting access to town beaches, parks, and playgrounds to residents only, or put in place barriers that made it difficult for urban families to access. In 1957, the town of Rye, in Westchester County, New York, instituted a ban on nonresidents' use of the town beach, which had been acquired by the city in 1909 as a "public park" and previously open to residents and nonresidents alike. The town of Long Beach, on Long Island, steadily increased beach access fees from 25 cents in 1935 to $2 in 1970, before passing an ordinance limiting access to the beach to residents for an annual membership fee.[15] In its 1968 report on the nation's marine resources, the Stratton Commission found "a growing tendency by counties and municipalities adjoining large urban areas to restrict their local parks to use by local residents," which, they concluded, "threatens to surround major concentrations of population with recreation facilities they are forbidden to use. The latter development particularly discriminates against low-income groups and racial minorities."[16] The implementation of access fees and resident-only policies (and the vast disparities in access to recreational lands that resulted) became, as ACLU lawyer and Constitutional law professor Lawrence Sager put it, "part of a whole syndrome of suburban exclusionary measures" designed to hoard economic and natural resources in the suburbs, and free its residents from responsibility for the conditions of adjoining cities.[17] "One would have to live in a vacuum," a law review note commented, "not to suspect that many beach restrictions are based in part on racial motivation, intermingled with the idea of building a wall between city and suburb."[18]

Location and ease of access to public outdoor space were key determinants in a given municipality's restriction of public access, and consequently, their embrace of the concept of public space. On Long Island, New York, for example, towns located along passenger rail lines leading from New York City tended to have access restrictions to town beaches and other outdoor recreational areas.[19] In contrast, the distant, exclusive havens of South Hampton and East Hampton, accessible only by automobile, maintained some of the more liberal recreational land access regulations on Long Island.[20] Equipped with these explicit or implicit barriers, public

[14] HUD, *Urban Recreation Report*, 20.
[15] John Darnton, "Suburbs Stiffening Beach Curbs," *New York Times*, July 10, 1972.
[16] Stratton Report, VII–247.
[17] Anthony Wolff, "We Shall Fight Them on the Beaches…," *Harper's,* August 1973, 58, 55.
[18] Note, "Public Access to Beaches: Common Law Doctrines and Constitutional Challenges," *New York University Law Review* 48 (1973), 393n.171.
[19] "More Towns are Closing Beach Areas to Outsiders," *New York Times,* July 4, 1970.
[20] Southampton allowed nonresidents to purchase a $25 season pass, while East Hampton charged nonresidents $5 for a season pass; See "Suburbs Stiffening Beach Curbs," *New York Times,* July 10, 1972.

parks and beaches became cherished commodities, generously supported with tax dollars, and well maintained.

In economically mixed municipalities, with gaping disparities in poverty and wealth, by contrast, public beaches and parks were not a priority of town governments and undeveloped areas suitable for public recreation were often deliberately rezoned so as to allow for private development. New Rochelle, New York, had Westchester County's most racially and economically diverse population, with African Americans comprising 14 percent of the city's population. In the late 1930s, local NAACP lawyers Randal Tolliver and Leon Scott succeeded in opening Westchester County's public beaches to African Americans, only to see the city steadily divest itself of places of public recreation in the coming years. By 1960, the city boasted six private beach clubs along its nine miles of waterfront, but only two public beaches. Public administrators actively thwarted efforts to convert undeveloped waterfront property into public beach space, and instead rezoned for private development.[21] In his biography of the urban planning titan Robert Moses, historian Robert Caro situated Moses's actions that resulted in Long Island's Jones Beach being practically inaccessible to poorer urban residents within a longer history of exclusionary practices aimed at keeping outdoor recreational spaces "impregnable" to undesirable populations.[22] As a result, Caro noted, most New Yorkers who attempted to find a place to swim and picnic on Long Island "turned around and slunk home, eating their picnic lunches in their cars, washing them down with bitterness and frustration. If they swam on Long Island, they swam in their cars in their sweat."[23]

While suburbs thrived, cities suffered. As people, industries, and taxes fled America's cities in the postwar era, they left behind a devastated urban landscape, with city governments unable to maintain, much less expand, public recreation programs and facilities, and unwilling to protect urban waterfronts from pollution. City and state governments, in collaboration with industries, continued to concentrate dumps, power plants, and waste-producing factories in Black and Brown areas. This, in turn, further accelerated whites' exodus and helped them explain (and rationalize) their embrace of exclusionary policies. In cities such as Detroit, historian David M. P. Freund found, beaches and parks became a spatial reference point in white discourses on racial difference. Whereas whites in suburbs such as Dearborn took pride in their town's safe, clean, and well-maintained recreational amenities ("I like Dearborn because of the fishing, the swimming, and the hunting … Camp Dearborn is always clean," one resident wrote[24]), they explained their abandonment of the city, and justification of new exclusionary measures, by pointing to the urban places of public recreation left behind. "[D]rive around Detroit and look at its city parks[.]" "[N]o matter where the negro has lived the property is hurt…. The parks are a good example."[25] Through outdoor recreational space, white suburbanites drew, as Freund put it,

[21] Paul D. Dennis, "A Coast Off Limits to the Poor," *New York Times,* April 17, 1977. See also Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2009), 190.
[22] Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1974), 152.
[23] Caro, *The Power Broker*, 154.
[24] David P. M. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Radical Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 366.
[25] Freund, *Colored Property,* 338, 335.

"a cognitive map of race relations and of white racial privilege," and in so doing, underscored Gerald Frug's contention that metropolitan fragmentation is not only created by law but is "perpetuated by the kind of person this fragmentation has nurtured."[26]

What whites chose to ignore was the direct relationship between their own prosperity and ease of access to rural outdoor spaces and the deteriorating conditions of urban America. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 and mass highway construction that followed not only lowered white executives and workers' commutes into downtown business districts; it also allowed automobile-owning families to access rural areas and experience nature. These same interstates also tore through the heart of urban Black communities, dispersing residents, decimating commercial districts, dividing and walling off neighborhoods, reinforcing residential segregation, deepening Black ghettoization, and speeding capital's flight to the suburbs. Highway construction and urban renewal projects also dramatically reduced the amount of green space in cities and introduced unprecedented levels of noise and air pollution to urban environments. Between 1966 and 1972, a HUD study found over 22,000 acres of urban parkland was lost to highways, housing, and utilities.[27] As highways replaced urban green space, the automobiles they were designed for became a virtual requirement for those seeking access to the "great outdoors." Urban residents who did not own an automobile, a 1962 report from the U.S. Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (USORRRC) concluded, are effectively "barred from participation in a broad range of recreational opportunities."[28]

Urban Black America's Long Hot Summer

On a sweltering summer day on Chicago's West Side in July 1966, a group of Black youth went in search of a place to cool off. They had few viable options. Chicago's Parks and Recreation department had deliberately located most of the city's public swimming pools in white neighborhoods; even those within walking distance, while officially open to all residents, were in practice exclusive to whites, who greeted any Blacks who dared to enter with open hostility and violence. One pool that had been popular among neighborhood youth had been torn down to make way for an expressway. The closest beach had been closed by public health officials due to pollution. So, lacking other options, they turned on a fire hydrant and played in the spray. This was a common occurrence on the streets of urban America during the summer months, one that law enforcement routinely ignored when done by white youth. But on the Black West Side, it elicited a squad of police officers, who descended on the neighborhood, summarily turned off the hydrant, and threatened to arrest anyone who dared to turn it back on.

[26] Freund, *Colored Property,* 375; Gerald E. Frug, *City Making: Building Communities without Building Walls* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 80.
[27] Shriver, "Achieving Environmental Justice," 12.
[28] U.S. Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, "Economic Studies of Outdoor Recreation," (Washington, DC: U.S. Printing Office, 1962), 10.

Figure 2: Cooling Off with the Fire Hydrant. Harlem, New York, 1948. Photographed by Gordon Parks. Courtesy of and copyright The Gordon Parks Foundation

After officers shut off the water, Black youth began shouting back. Why didn't the cops turn off hydrants in white neighborhoods? one kid asked. "We run this. You niggers don't run nothin' around here," a cop barked in response. Moments after the officers had left, another youth shouted, "If they can keep theirs on, we can, too," and proceeded to unscrew a hydrant cap. When the police returned, they were pelted with bricks, rocks, and bottles. Within minutes dozens of squad cars flooded the West Side. Cops clubbed protesters indiscriminately and fired into crowds. Blacks fought back with whatever weapons were at their disposal. Violence and civil disorder raged for three straight days.[29] In its aftermath, West Side organizer James G. Allen captured the frustrations of many Black Chicagoans whose search for pleasure and relief during the summer months invariably ended in bitterness and frustration. "We can't go to the beaches unless we fight when we get there and fight our way back. We have no swimming pool

[29] Andrew W. Kahrl, *Free the Beaches: The Story of Ned Coll and the Battle for America's Most Exclusive Shoreline* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 73.

in this area, so the only way to cool off is the fire hydrant."[30] And for that, they were beaten by police.

The uprising on Chicago's West Side was one of several triggered by conflicts over access to recreational space or amenities during the long, hot summers of discontent in 1960s urban America. Invariably, public officials looked to the immediate—as opposed to the underlying—causes of Black unrest, so when conflicts involving swimming pools or access to water triggered conflict, cities responded by quickly appropriating funds and hastily constructing swimming pools and play spaces in Black neighborhoods. Following an uprising in Jersey City, New Jersey, in 1964, purportedly sparked by the "lack of financing of recreational facilities" in the city's housing projects, city officials appropriated funds for the construction of several new playgrounds in low-income Black neighborhoods.[31] In the wake of the 1966 uprising on Chicago's West Side, the Federal Office of Economic Opportunity rushed through a $400,000 program that provided funds to forty cities to meet immediate recreational needs. By 1968, the Chicago Park District had constructed 32 new swimming pools, 13 spray pools, 22 multi-purpose basketball and volleyball courts, four fieldhouses, and one new running track.[32]

Indeed, social unrest encouraged cities to move with haste. In Harlem, Holcombe Rucker, a World War II veteran, returned home to pursue a career teaching and to share his love of basketball, believing education and supervised recreation could help troubled Black youth in the neighborhood. In the late 1940s, he started a small outdoor basketball tournament for Black youth and often stressed grades and decorum to his young players.[33] "Holcombe was like a father, especially to a lot of guys who didn't have fathers," remembers one high school basketball star whom Rucker coached.[34] Although he worked for New York City's parks department, he received little support from city recreation leaders who believed the tournament fell beyond the scope of his responsibilities which left him to come out of his own pocket and seek sponsors.[35] Despite the limitations, his summer tournaments quickly grew in popularity and added divisions for teams composed of more skilled and collegiate players. Several years later, in 1965, parks department officials acquiesced to Rucker's requests and transferred him, and his tournament, to a more desirable location that would eventually be dedicated as Rucker Park (Local Park) after his untimely death that year.[36] In the coming years, Rucker Park would become a magnet for the city's most talented young basketball players, and play host to pick-up games and tournaments

[30] James G. Allen Jr., "Here's How Westsider Explains the Outbreak," *Chicago Defender*, July 16, 1966. See also Jeff Wiltse, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 184–88.
[31] Richard G. Kraus, *Public Recreation and the Negro: A Study of Participating and Administrative Practices* (New York: Center for Urban Education, 1968), 17; James Frederick Murphy, "Egalitarianism and Separatism: A History of Approaches in the Provision of Public Recreation and Leisure Service for Blacks, 1906–1972" (PhD diss., Oregon State University, 1972), 138.
[32] National League of Cities, "Recreation in the Nation's Cities: Problems and Approaches" (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, 1968), 8.
[33] Vincent M. Mallozzi, *Asphalt Gods: An Oral History of the Rucker Tournament* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 7–10; Jarrod Jonsrud, "Harlem's Unsung Hero: The Life and Legacy of Holcombe Rucker," *Journal of Sport History* 38, no. 1 (2011): 23–24.
[34] Vincent Mallozzi, "His Eyes Have Seen the Glory of Rucker Park," *The New York Times,* June 24, 2007.
[35] Jonsrud, "Harlem's Unsung Hero," 28–29; Mallozzi, *Asphalt God,* 27.
[36] Jonsrud, "Harlem's Unsung Hero," 28–31; Mallozzi, *Asphalt God,* 74, 76–77.

where future professional basketball stars such as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Nate Archibald, Wilt Chamberlain, Julius "Dr. J" Erving, Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, Connie Hawkins, and countless other streetball legends honed their craft and changed the game itself. Many of the playing styles, aesthetics, and on-court moves common to the game of basketball today—slam dunks, crossover dribbles, playing above the rim—grew out of the more rhythmic, expressive, and spontaneous style of play that Rucker Park nurtured during the 1960s and 1970s.[37] "Like the changes the city made in the blues [music]," critic Nelson George wrote, "the way brothers played ball [at Rucker Park] absorbed the quirks and characteristics of the urban scene surrounding them. The 'new' ball was about putting one's personal stamp on any given contest, about using a team sport as a way to tell your story just as the beboppers did on bandstands nightly up North in every major city. City ball was faster, louder, more stop-and-go, and like bebop defiant of established standards of performance."[38]

Though city officials had been slow to legitimize Rucker's tournaments, following a summer of unrest in 1966, New York City officials quickly constructed mini-swimming pools in several predominantly Black neighborhoods, closed selected city streets to traffic for children to play, placed sprinklers on fire hydrants, and offered bus and boat excursions to cultural sites for urban youth.[39] The following summer, it launched "Operation Safety Valve," a plan to take busloads of urban youth to state parks and outdoor areas located outside of the city.[40] Every day, as many as 60 buses rolled through Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and other Black and Brown neighborhoods, picked children off the street and, an hour later, unloaded them at state parks in upstate New York—"places that might as well have been in California to these youngsters," as one writer put it—where they "explore[d] meadows and hills and lakes, … picnic[ked], sw[a]m, and enjoy[ed] nature." City and state administrators cheered these relatively inexpensive programs as a "resounding success," and noted that they "certainly helped to 'cool it' during the summer."[41] In Flint, Michigan, local officials launched a similar program to take busloads of underprivileged children on field trips to the straits of Mackinac during the summer. In Cincinnati, Ohio, local officials launched "Operation Cool Summer," which provided jobs for young Black men and women to work on recreation and beautification projects in low-income Black neighborhoods. Baltimore hired a troop of "traveling playleaders" to go into "problem areas" driving trucks (dubbed "fun wagons") filled with games, portable basketball hoops, volleyball nets, and a marionette stage.[42]

[37] See Nelson George, *Elevating the Game: Black Men and Basketball* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992); Mallozzi, *Asphalt Gods*; Nunyo Demasio, "Carrying On an Asphalt Legacy," *New York Times,* August 21, 1995.
[38] George, *Elevating the Game,* 72. Rucker Park continues to host basketball tournaments some of which draw professional athletes.
[39] "Program Rushed for Slum Youth," *New York Times,* August 7, 1966.
[40] Kraus, *Public Recreation and the Negro,* 19.
[41] Barry S. Tindall, "From Bedford-Stuyvesant to Bear Mountain," *Parks and Recreation* 4 (1969): 41–42.
[42] Richard F. Fralick, "Park and Recreation Leaders' Response to Social Unrest," *Parks and Recreation* 2 (1967): 26–28, 54–63.

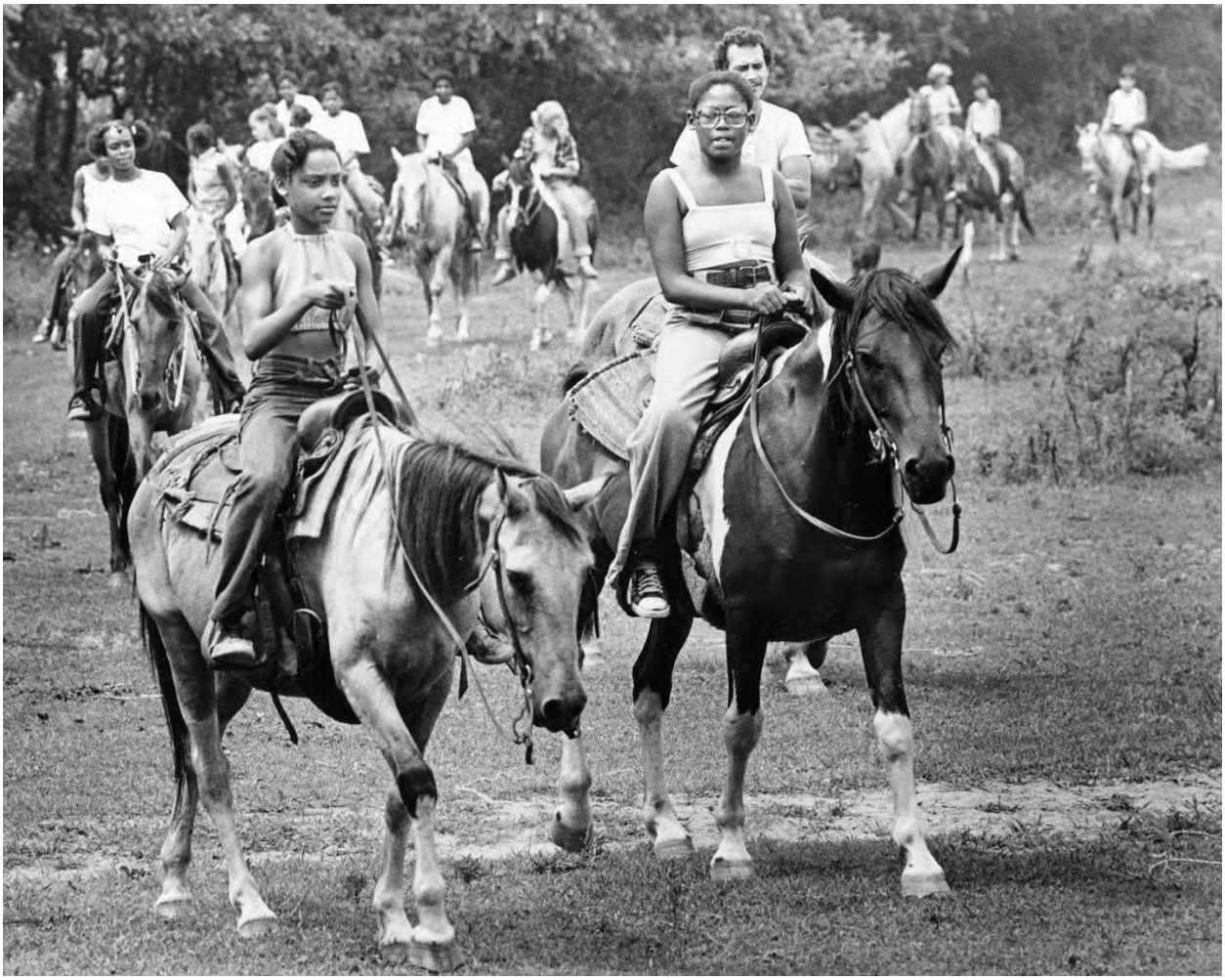

Figure 3: *City Youngsters Hit the Trail*. Washington Township, New Jersey, July 28, 1976. Black youth from Camden, New Jersey riding horses at Rockin' Horse Ranch as part of a city school board summer recreational program. Courtesy of the George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Collection, Temple University Special Collections Research Center.

On the eve of another long hot summer in 1967, President Lyndon Johnson told a crowd of reporters, "We are trying to do everything we can … to minimize the tensions that exist … by opening up recreational areas, swimming pools, supervised play and additional training facilities, all of which we think will be helpful."[43] It was not. That summer, U.S. cities were rocked by a series of rebellions, the largest in Detroit and Newark. In its aftermath, President Johnson formed a commission to study the underlying causes of civil disorder. The following year, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders—also known as the Kerner Commission, after its chairman, Illinois Governor Otto Kerner—released its report. It found that the absence of safe, healthy, and attractive places of play factored high among the grievances of residents of cities that had experienced mass-scale uprisings. Poor recreation facilities and programs, the report concluded, was the fifth most intense grievance and factor fueling urban unrest, behind only police practices, unemployment and underemployment, inadequate housing, and inadequate

[43] Kraus, *Public Recreation and the Negro*, 86.

education. In three of the cities it studied, poor recreation was listed as the most intense grievance.[44]

The absence of pools and parks provided, for many white officials, a simple, comforting explanation for urban unrest, and the provision of places of play an easy solution. Leaders in the recreation industry were eager to establish that connection and convince local governments to invest in recreation development. After the city of New Brunswick, New Jersey, avoided major uprisings during the summer of 1967, industry officials credited the city's relative calm to its decision to place five portable swimming pools in urban minority neighborhoods. "In Newark they had declared martial law," one article in the industry publication *Parks and Recreation* boasted. "In New Brunswick, a few miles away, they were enjoying their new community swimming pools."[45]

Figure 4: Children playing at the Morris Park Pool (now Marcus Garvey Mini-Pool) in Harlem, New York, 1967. Photographed by Daniel McPartlin. Courtesy of the New York City Parks Photo Archive.

[44] National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), 81; Seymour M. Gold, *Urban Recreation Planning* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1973), 80–81.

[45] "Instant Swimming Operation," *Parks and Recreation* 3, no. 4 (1968): 33. The above-ground swimming pool industry, which enjoyed a rapid growth during this period. Prior to the summer of 1968, the city of Baltimore appropriated $2 million to the recreation department and earmarked $250,000 for the purchase and installation of 46 pools. By the late 1960s, one study noted, portable pools became an integral part of state and municipal recreation budgets. See Herman Silverman, "Portable Swimming Pools—Going Strong," *Parks and Recreation* 4 (1969): 48–49.

After years of channeling funds to the recreational development of suburbia, the federal government, beginning in the late 1960s, pumped unprecedented dollars into urban parks and recreation, especially targeting low-income, inner-city neighborhoods. In 1970, HUD raised the percentage of total funding for the Open Space Land Program targeted at low-income neighborhoods from six to 33 percent, and total funding for programs jumped from $30 to $75 million. The $500 million "New Town" program, passed in 1970 and administered by HUD, included provisions for planning and zoning of urban parks. The Legacy of Parks program, passed in 1970, provided HUD with an infusion of funds to convert vacant properties in low-income, urban areas and decommissioned military bases along urban waterfronts into "Recreation Reservoirs." After tearing through urban parks and replacing green space with pavement, the Department of Transportation, as stipulated in the Federal Highway Act of 1968, was prohibited from approving routes that cut through existing parkland unless no "feasible and prudent" alternative could be found.[46]

Projects aimed at improving urban neighborhoods were premised on the assumption that urban minority communities stood to benefit from the types of social spaces familiar to suburban white families, and conversely, that the patterns of play and relief children and families had fashioned for themselves within urban environments represented a source of unrest, rather than a means of its alleviation. As the site where tense stand-offs between African Americans and police mushroomed into violent confrontations and full-scale uprisings, the streets of riot-torn cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Newark came to symbolize the role of urban space in breeding unrest and anti-social behavior. Long-range urban renewal plans inevitably worked to replace blocked-off city streets— "the only playground known to many nonwhite urban dwellers," one report ruefully noted—with public parks and playgrounds, and to disaggregate residential from recreational space.[47] These top-down approaches to urban recreational planning often neglected to coordinate with targeted communities or incorporate their traditional uses of urban space into its designs. One field researcher for the Model Cities program described urban park planning as little more than placing a "green blob on the master plan."[48]

The vest pocket park, first tested in Philadelphia in the mid-1960s, soon became the standard, uniform response of cities to the urban recreation crisis. Tucked in densely populated, low-income neighborhoods, often in the vacant lots of burned-out commercial districts destroyed during uprisings of previous summers, these pocket parks generally consisted of two or three benches and tables, a swing set and other play equipment for children, a solitary tree or shrub, a mural on an adjacent building wall, and sometimes a small shelter. Some parks were funded by private philanthropists and wealthy foundations and strove for the monumental, with, as one study commented, "whimsical equipment—shelters that give no protection from the sun or rain, lavish wading pools that don't cool off any more kids than a cheap spray." Many cities enlisted graduate students at design schools to create pocket parks. In many other instances, the parks were created by local community groups seeking to provide outdoor recreational space for

[46] Linda K. Lee, "Progress or Promises? Federal Legislation in the 1960s," *Parks and Recreation* 6 (1971): 10–14, 91–92; Nanine Clay, "Miniparks—Diminishing Returns," *Parks and Recreation* 6, no. 1 (1971): 23; HUD, "Improvements Needed in Administration of Open-Space Land Program," 45.
[47] U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, *The Recreation Imperative: The Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan* 1 (1970): 54.
[48] NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunity in America's Inner Cities," 59.

families and children, and desperate to rid their neighborhoods of trash-strewn lots and dilapidated, abandoned structures.

In the summer of 1965, the Harlem-based community social services agency Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (known as HARYOU) enlisted over 2,500 area youth to turn abandoned lots across the borough into pocket parks.[49] At the corner of 127th Street and Lenox Avenue in Harlem, a group of senior citizens banded together to turn a vacant lot into a community garden in the summer of 1969.[50] In the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, boys and girls scout troops cleared lots of debris and planted trees in new pocket parks in the summer of 1966.[51] That same summer in a severely depressed neighborhood in West Philadelphia, a neighborhood community council succeeded in turning a block that had been home to dozens of abandoned cars into a neighborhood park, with a boardwalk and concrete checker tables.[52] In 1969, the District of Columbia opened nineteen pocket-parks on abandoned lots in neighborhoods that had suffered massive property destruction during the uprising following Martin Luther King's assassination in April 1968.[53]

For city officials, such community-led initiatives constituted an inexpensive way to address the glaring racial inequities in outdoor recreational space, one that they touted as the first step toward a neighborhood's revitalization. Rarely, though, did additional investments follow. In parts of Washington, DC, one report noted, "parks were the only redevelopment to take place" in the aftermath of urban uprisings.[54] As one researcher for NPRA put it, "No doubt that many a minipark has initially improved the looks of a formerly trash-filled lot. No doubt in places where neighborhood people have had no experience with miniparks, the new facilities raised hopes that 'city hall' was actually doing something." Those hopes, however, were "dashed when neither adults nor children found use in the parklet."[55] Before long, many of these parks fell into disrepair, became littered with trash and overgrown weeds, were avoided by families and children, and came to symbolize municipal neglect.

In her searing indictment of postwar urban planning, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* Jane Jacobs lambasted urban planners' uncritical veneration of parks as facilitators of wholesome behavior and contrasted the informal vibrancy of the public sidewalk and its vitality to urban community life with the ignored, unused, and often dangerous parks and green spaces intended, ironically, to combat crime and delinquency and improve urban life.[56] The quick deterioration and neglect of post-riot urban parks and playgrounds seemed to underscore Jacobs's contention. These spaces bore little relationship to the social and recreational activities of the communities they aimed to serve. Whereas urban recreation was conducted in multi-use spaces such as sidewalks and streets, where parents and children, residents and commercial

[49] "Harlem Dedicates Vest Pocket Parks," *Philadelphia Tribune*, June 26, 1965.
[50] "A Garden Fashioned From Dreams," *New York Amsterdam News*, June 28, 1969.
[51] "Big Block Cleanup Operation," *New York Amsterdam News*, June 11, 1966.
[52] "Launch 42nd Street 'Vest Pocket' Park," *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 20, 1966.
[53] NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunity in America's Inner Cities," 50.
[54] NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunity in America's Inner Cities," 50.
[55] NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunity in America's Inner Cities," 56.
[56] Gold, *Urban Recreation Planning*, 44, 106; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life and Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), 29–142.

proprietors intermingled, playgrounds and parks sought to disaggregate residence from recreation, and children from adults. Miniparks were often set within two buildings, far removed from the street and daily activity. Parents complained that they were unable to keep an eye on their children, while teenagers considered them the "dullest, least viable, part of the block."[57] These attempts to place "one use facilit[ies] in a complex setting," parks planner Dwight F. Rettie noted, were doomed to fail.[58] During a visit to a newly built pocket park in Harlem on a hot summer evening, Nanine Clay observed:

> People in doorways, people on sidewalks, young men lounging against parked cars, women leaning from windows, kids everywhere. In the middle of a block of high tenements a narrow playground was empty. But directly across the street, in a similar size lot, trash-filled and unimproved, a large man was cooking chickens on an improvised grill. The smell was delicious. Nearby, old men played checkers with a board on their knees, teen-agers stood around in groups, small kids were underfoot. But the playlot across the street was unused. The needs of adults and teen-agers had been overlooked, and we guessed that without them as participating decision-makers, some agency had decided a tot lot was what the neighborhood needed. The kids themselves stayed away from it, preferring to hang out where the action really was—in the vacant lot.[59]

Indeed, urban planners often ignored the recommendations of block mothers and neighborhood organizations, but instead preferred, as one critic noted, "token participation" over "functional involvement" of citizens.[60]

Like the remote, often-dangerous "colored" parks and beaches that cities threw together in the first half of the twentieth century, many of these new urban parks were seldom used, and urban minority communities more often saw them as fomenters of (rather than antidotes to) crime and delinquency. As one National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) investigator put it, "Who wants to spend time on an asphalt lot, with no water, littered with broken bottles and empty cans, far from the traditional centers of community participation and with no physical facilities or personnel to suggest more imaginative use of the space?"[61] Another investigator was struck by "how empty [miniparks] were even on warm days and evenings when we expected them to be teeming."[62] Parents complained that these characterless assortments of heavy concrete and steel often provided an easy target for vandals and a magnet for "winos, peeping toms, drug users, and lovers."[63] One park in Brooklyn improved through grants from "Operation Safety Valve" was, within months of completion, a "disaster area," as one report described it. The playground "was

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[57] Clay, "Miniparks—Diminishing Returns," 25.
[58] Dwight F. Rettie, "Areas and Facilities in the Inner City," in *Proceedings Congress for Recreation and Parks: National Recreation and Park Association, Seattle, WA., October 13-17, 1968* (Washington, DC: NRPA, 1969), 139–42.
[59] Clay, "Miniparks—Diminishing Returns," 23.
[60] James A. Madison, "Urban Recreation Problems," *Parks and Recreation* 3 (1968): 14–16; On the frequent criticism of urban minority communities on their lack of input into the design of recreation projects, see Clarence M. Pendleton Jr., "Community Involvement," *Parks and Recreation* 5 (1970): 21.
[61] NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunity in America's Inner Cities," ix.
[62] NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunity in America's Inner Cities," 56.
[63] Clay, "Miniparks—Diminishing Returns," 23.

covered with broken glass and debris; the fences were ripped open again; the water fountains were not operating … The only people using the playground doing anything were the 'winos' and 'hopheads' who frequent it…. Children were playing in the street amid the debris of burned out buildings but not in the park."[64] Another lacked any supervisors or equipment.[65] Some parks were so poorly located that they were disassembled soon after their completion. In one city, neighborhood groups organized in opposition to miniparks, rejecting eight proposed miniparks as being irrelevant to their community's needs.[66] In a 1973 survey of recreation and park administrators, 64 percent of respondents reported strong demands or confrontations from racial minority groups for improved facilities and programs and an increased voice in decision-making.[67]

Urban park and recreation programs administered by city and federal agencies fell under harsh rebuke by grassroots activists and community leaders for their failure to understand the dynamics of urban life or tailor programs to suit the specific needs of local communities. V. Hap Smith, Oakland, California's director of parks and recreation, denounced the "moronic thinking" of white park and recreation administrators who "do not understand black thinking" and who believed that "poor black people [had] little to offer even if they could understand the dimensions of land acquisition, development, and construction costs."[68] Otho Boykin, a coordinator of neighborhood services in North Philadelphia, contrasted the city's self-congratulatory claims to have one of the finest recreation programs in the nation with the city's poor schools and the persistence of crime, violence, and drug use among Black youth. "While all of these programs and buildings were going up and play areas being created, our youth were shooting one another, snorting scag, mainlining, and just hanging around, waiting to recreate." With underfunded schools and curricula inapplicable to career development leading to shockingly high unemployment rates among the city's Black youth, "you better believe we know how to *recreate!*" Boykin commented. "[B]ut do you planners know *how* we recreate?"[69]

In densely populated urban neighborhoods, recreation often took place on the front stoop of apartment buildings, where groups gathered to laugh, chat, watch the foot traffic, or on the sidewalk, where parents brought out beach chairs and chattered while keeping watch over neighborhood children. "There is a vibrancy to Harlem in the summer," as one observer put it, "vibrancy, liveliness, noise, motion, and splashes of color in dress."[70] Local residents, not planning experts, critics argued, should be deciding how to best spend public dollars on urban recreation. In 1969, a group of neighborhood and advocacy planning groups in New York City called for public funds earmarked for urban recreation be dispersed to local organizations as block money grants "flexible enough so priorities in jobs, education, etc., can be combined with

[64] Kraus, *Public Recreation and the Negro,* 66.
[65] Kraus, *Public Recreation and the Negro,* 67.
[66] NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunities in America's Cities," 56.
[67] Richard Kraus, "Recreation and Parks - Under Fire!," *Parks and Recreation* 8 (1973): 27. See also NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunity in America's Inner Cities," 49.
[68] V. Hap Smith, "A Black Man's Concept of Leisure in America," *Parks and Recreation* 10 (1975): 52.
[69] Otho Boykin Jr., "Disadvantaged: Programs or People?," in *Highlights 70: 1970 Congress for Recreation and Parks* (Washington, DC: National. Park and Recreation Association, 1971), 236.
[70] McCandlish Phillips, "Harlem Today: Its Residents Seek to Dispel Whites' Fears of Area," *New York Times,* August 6, 1966.

open space development," that funding for open space development programs be channeled through local organizations, and that professional planners and designers listen to "local people who have an intimate knowledge of the places where they live."[71]

Criticisms of urban recreation programs launched in the aftermath of 1960s uprisings were as much about public officials' decision to focus on this single issue as they were criticisms of the programs themselves. Journalist Robert Lipsyte deemed recreation as a form of riot prevention "cynical and patronizing."[72] The social scientist Kenneth Clark remarked, "The need for such services cannot be denied, and it may be presumed that they bring some measure of gratification and pleasure to the lives of youth in the ghetto. But the fundamental predicament of ghetto youth remains unchanged. Recreation cannot compensate for the depressive realities of their lives…. A nice place to play is simply *not enough*. And it certainly is not evidence of the type of caring which could make a difference in the lives of young people in the ghetto."[73] Federal Judge Leon Higginbotham wondered what these types of remedial measures aimed to accomplish:

> Do we feel that if we put up a beautiful park, as important as that is, and I support it, that we don't have to care about a public school system which is so acutely underfinanced that it will perpetuate another generation guaranteed of ignorance and unmotivation? Do we feel that if maybe in one instance you took a few poor whites or Mexicans or blacks from the ghetto out to a lovely state park that you don't have to be concerned about a failure to deliver adequate health care to everyone in that block?...
>
> [I]f there is anyone here who will ever try to take the approach that leisure will solve all of America's basic ills, then you're like the man who looked at a sick body and said, well, we will cure the fractured femur or thigh bone and we won't be concerned about the heart; … We won't call in all of the other disciplines; we're just going to get the thigh bone cured, or the femur healed, and let the rest of the body decay.[74]

While expanding access to leisure space alone could not address the root causes of Black unrest, the exclusionary devices white suburbs employed to keep outdoor spaces to themselves was symptomatic of the structural barriers that fueled and sustained racial apartheid in postwar America.

Out of this shared frustration at the inadequacies of racial liberalism to address the structural causes of racial inequality, and white liberals unwillingness to disinvest in whiteness and invest in Black people, Black Power as a slogan and framework for Black liberation gained greater resonance among Black Americans. As Black people struggled daily to feed their children, find a place to rest and play or cool off on a hot summer's day, and avoid being assaulted by police who prowled their neighborhoods like an occupying force, Black Power became an urgent

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[71] Clay, "Miniparks—Diminishing Returns," 26.
[72] Robert Lipsyte, "Of Safety Valves and Inkwells," *New York Times*, April 25, 1968.
[73] Kenneth B. Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), 99–100.
[74] A. Leon Higginbotham Jr., "The Challenge of Leisure in America's Period of Unrest," *Highlights 70: 1970 Congress for Recreation and Parks,* Philadelphia, September 27–30, 1970 (Washington, DC: NRPA, 1971), 135.

necessity, the logical extension of the Black freedom movement, not a divergence from or rejection of earlier struggles. Groups and organizations like the Black Panther Party recognized that the totality of Black life was at stake, and through its programs, worked to address the recreational needs of Black families and children. This was most evident in the work of Chicago's Black Panther Party chapter under the leadership of Fred Hampton, who fought to have swimming pools and recreational centers built for Black children in underserved neighborhoods.[75]

Building and Contesting Barriers in Suburban America

As Black rage boiled over in cities, suburban whites doubled-down on exclusionary tactics aimed at denying people of color access to their housing markets, schools, and places of public recreation. Nationwide, predominantly white suburban municipalities enacted new restrictions or stepped-up enforcement of existing ordinances aimed at restricting access to public beaches, swimming pools, and parks. In 1972, officials in suburban Nassau County, New York, enacted a blanket ban on all non-county residents' use of outdoor recreational spaces and required residents to obtain a photo ID card, called a "leisure pass," to access public parks and beaches, or use public golf courses or swimming pools.[76]

In Connecticut, wealthy residents of shoreline towns responded with fury and indignation to a campaign launched by white social activist Ned Coll in the early 1970s to provide trips to the state's beaches for underprivileged Black youth, sparking a decade-long battle over public access to outdoor recreational resources in the state. While Coll's efforts to provide Black children a day at the beach or a weekend stay at a white family's vacation home was similar to those of groups like the Fresh Air Fund—which, for decades, had placed underprivileged urban youth in the homes of wealthy white families during the summer months—it was different in one crucial respect. Whereas the Fresh Air Fund arranged visits well in advance, and sought the support of local officials, Coll's Revitalization Corps instead showed up on public and private beaches, unannounced, and claimed equal and unrestricted enjoyment of outdoor recreational spaces as a right. These actions (which white residents often described as an "invasion") also aimed to call attention to structural mechanisms of exclusion and challenge the commitment of white liberals to the cause of racial justice, which voluntary programs such as the Fresh Air Fund deliberately sidestepped. As Coll described, "We're confronting people's consciences. We're not giving people a direct opportunity to pass the buck."[77]

Direct actions against exclusionary measures in outdoor places of recreation proliferated in the 1970s. Along the nation's coasts, an open beaches movement staged protests and filed dozens of lawsuits challenging the actions of private homeowners and wealthy communities to fence off access to beaches that, under the Public Trust Doctrine, legally belonged to the public. In some instances, these campaigns called attention to the racist motives behind exclusionary measures or highlighted the costs such barriers imposed on people of color, or linked such practices to a wider system of structural racism governing spatial relations in metropolitan America, as was the

[75] Craig S. McPherson, "Fred Ain't Dead: The Impact of the Life and Legacy of Fred Hampton" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 2015), 13–18.
[76] "Suburbs Stiffening Beach Curbs."
[77] Kahrl, *Free the Beaches*.

case in Connecticut in the 1970s. But more often, these middle-class, white-led campaigns limited their concerns to abstract notions of public rights to access outdoor space and protection of environments from private development and failed to address the interests and concerns of Black communities.[78]

Bringing Parks to the People

By the 1970s, growing numbers of Black Americans openly rejected the liberal racial paternalism embodied in programs like the Fresh Air Fund, which operated from the premise that Black youth stood to benefit from immersion in privileged white spaces, and other programs aimed at facilitating urban Blacks' access to white suburban space.[79] Instead of bringing Black people to suburban parks, beaches, and playgrounds, some argued, bring the parks to the people. Beginning in the 1960s, the National Park Service took tentative steps to do just that. Under director George Hartzog, NPS worked to expand the scope and mission of the agency to include urban areas and underserved urban populations. Rather than devolve funding for outdoor recreation to local units of government, Hartzog sought to make NPS a vital presence in urban areas, through urban land acquisitions and the creation of new NPS parks that served urban populations who lacked the ability to travel to existing national parks in the western U.S.

Under Hartzog's directorship (1964–1972), "parks are for the people" became the mantra of the agency. In 1968, NPS launched the "Summer in the Parks" program for youth in Washington, DC. Consisting of a series of summer youth programs, concerts, and other public events, it aimed to serve the recreational needs of the city's disadvantaged, predominantly African American, population. By coincidence, the program launched in the aftermath of the civil unrest and riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968, which had resulted in widespread property loss and 13 deaths. Youth programs centered on, as historian Kathy Mengak describes, "Enhancing environmental awareness, developing outdoor recreation skills, and stimulating cultural awareness[.]" Throughout the summer of 1968, DC-area children "caught fish stocked by the Fish and Wildlife Service in the C&O Canal. They rode horses in Rock Creek Park. They visited a farm and petted the animals, went on a hayride, and later integrated their experiences into an arts and crafts program." Public officials, Mengak found, "credited these programs with helping decrease crime in volatile neighborhoods. Washington's officials even publicly acknowledged the program's importance in saving the city from more severe rioting." In subsequent years, NPS expanded the Summer in the Parks programs to other cities.[80]

NPS aimed to expand the scope of its programming in urban America even further with its plans to create a series of new national parks in major cities, the first two of which were designated for

[78] See Kahrl, *Free the Beaches;* Marc R. Poirier, "Environmental Justice and the Beach Access Movements of the 1970s in Connecticut and New Jersey: Stories of Property and Civil Rights," *Connecticut Law Review* 28 (1996): 719–812.
[79] Tobin Miller Shearer, *Two Weeks Every Summer: Fresh Air Children and the Problem of Race in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017).
[80] Kathy Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians: The Legacy of George B. Hartzog Jr.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), 106–108. On the Summer in the Parks program, see also Felicia Garland-Jackson and Debra Lattanzi Shutika, *Summer in the Parks (1968-1976): A Special Ethnohistory Study* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2019), https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/reference/profile/2283622.

New York City and San Francisco. Established in 1972, the Gateway National Recreation Areas (often referred to as "Gateway East" and "Gateway West") aimed to provide outdoor experiences for urban populations who, Hartzog bemoaned, suffered from social isolation and environmental deprivation. Hartzog wanted these to be the first of many such urban national parks.

The NPS's efforts to expand its urban recreational offerings was undercut by the Richard Nixon administration. During Nixon's presidency, the federal government began ending programs and withdrawing funding for urban recreation. As part of a broader series of administrative reforms labeled New Federalism, Nixon replaced targeted funds with block grants that states and localities could use as they pleased. While this rhetorically responded to Black communities' demands for greater say in public spending, it proved to be a sleight of hand disguising sharp cuts in overall spending on urban areas.[81]

Nixon's New Federalism was also at odds with the plans of the National Park Service. While he reluctantly agreed to establish the two Gateway parks, Nixon subsequently pushed Hartzog out in December 1972 and appointed Ronald Walker as NPS director. Walker promptly dismantled Hartzog's urban park initiatives. He eliminated funding for the Summer in the Parks program and scrapped plans for future urban park expansion.[82]

Envisioned as a natural space that would be accessible to New York City's underprivileged families and children, the Gateway National Recreation Area instead became mired in disputes between park administrators and area residents that, ultimately, resulted in it being inaccessible to those underserved populations who it was designed to serve. Following its establishment in 1972, the mostly white residents of the neighborhoods surrounding the Gateway Park successfully mobilized to prevent a low-income housing development on an abandoned airstrip near the park and the extension of public transportation to the area. Because of their influence, Mengak writes, "Gateway's final plans dramatically deemphasized high-density recreation use and ease of public access. Instead, the plans emphasized the quality of the park experience, environmental education programs, and resource protection. Visitation increased only slightly over what it had been prior to national park designation." "Gateway," Mengak concludes, "failed to live up to Hartzog's original intent and metamorphosed into a local park benefiting its immediate neighbors."[83]

Nixon's dismantling of the NPS's plans for expanding parks and programming in urban areas was one of many measures his administration adopted that undermined the quality of urban recreation. During his first term, Nixon phased out the Urban Parks Program and annually requested less than one-half of the $200 million annual appropriations for the Open Space Land

[81] Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 522.
[82] Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians,* 232.
[83] Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians,* 123.

Program in the federal budget, eliminating the program altogether in his second term.[84] In 1970, Nixon's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) barred the use of OEO funds for summer recreation programs, which it deemed "not relevant to either the immediate or long-term needs of poor youth."[85]

Defunding Public Recreation

In practice, Nixon's New Federalism shifted the burden of addressing urban recreational needs onto local agencies while affording city governments the leeway to redirect those funds toward other needs.[86] As urban tax bases dwindled, cities did just that. In 1970, officials in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, closed 45 playgrounds, most located in predominantly Black areas of the city, for lack of operating funds.[87] In Cleveland, Ohio, the city's recreation budget was cut by 80 percent, forcing the city to lay off 423 of its 500 employees in the parks and recreation department and close 26 recreational facilities across the city in 1971.[88] Later that year, the city of Syracuse, New York, slashed its recreation budget by 20 percent.[89] In 1971, the city of Dayton, Ohio, laid off its recreation superintendent, and the following summer discontinued maintenance of all of its 53 parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities, citing budgetary constraints. The parks remained open, though, with signs posted at the entrances warning of "high grass, broken glass, rodents and other hazards."[90] A 1971 survey of parks and recreation agencies in 45 cities found that over 40 percent had experienced budget cuts in the previous year. New York City experienced some of the most extreme cuts during the 1970s. Between 1968 and 1978, the city's Parks and Recreation Department suffered a 50 percent cutback in permanent personnel, a loss of over 3,000 employees.[91] Total spending on the city's parks decreased 60 percent (a loss of over $40 million in annual appropriations) between 1974 and 1980. "Municipal austerity," one report

[84] On the dismantling of Open Space Land Program, see HUD, "Improvements Needed in Administration of Open-Space Land Program." See also Michael K. Brown, "Gutting the Great Society: Black Economic Progress and the Budget Cuts," *Urban League Review* 7 (1982): 11–24. On Nixon's New Federalism, see Timothy Conlan, *New Federalism: Intergovernmental Reform from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1988); Thomas J. Sugrue, "All Politics is Local: The Persistence of Localism in Twentieth-Century America," in *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History,* eds. Meg Jacobs, William J. Novak, and Julian E. Zelizer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 317.

[85] William Serrin, "Summer Recreation Plan Killed: Inner-City Youngsters Affected," *Detroit Free Press*, March 13, 1970.

[86] Nixon signaled his attitude toward parks and recreation funding early in his administration, when he suppressed the release of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's report on the state of outdoor recreation in America. The report, five years in the making, offered a searing indictment of government and industry and the effects of unplanned, overdevelopment on the natural environment and quality of life of Americans. It called for a 5-year, $6 billion program of federal assistance to slow development, reclaim land, and provide parklands to previously neglected areas. Due to its high price tag and the blame it placed on government and industry, Nixon's Office of Management and Budget rejected its recommendations and prevented its release. Washington Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson released a draft of the plan, titled "The Recreation Imperative," in 1974.

[87] "City Says It May Close 45 Playgrounds," *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 29, 1970.

[88] "Sick! Sick! Sick!," *Parks and Recreation* 6 (1971): 13. On revenue sharing plans, see Diana R. Dunn and Linda K. Lee, "Urban Parks and Recreation under the New Federalism," *Parks and Recreation* 8 (1973): 22–25, 52–53.

[89] "We're Having Second Thoughts," *Parks and Recreation* 6 (1971): 15.

[90] NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunity in America's Inner Cities," 50.

[91] "Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate" (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 159.

by NRPA concluded, "has [had] a profound negative impact on the maintenance of city recreation and park system facilities."[92]

Critics warned that cities were forgetting the warnings of the Kerner Commission on the "indispensability of sound recreation services," and that by closing urban parks and recreation programs, they were dismantling "one of the few public services which can help to keep the city from finally becoming a true jungle" and "administering the last rites to an already badly beleaguered city."[93] But those warnings could barely be heard above the roar of a resurgent political Right that was on a mission to cut taxes on corporations and high-income earners and dismantle social welfare programs for the poor. As cities faced the choice between raising taxes or slashing services, "[T]he conservative ideologues who had been quiescent during prosperity now found their voices and began to articulate the hoary theme that recreational activity is unessential to people and is therefore dispensable," urban planning scholars Jay S. Shivers and Joseph W. Halper noted. "This," in turn, "led to a vicious downward spiral…. With the deteriorating conditions of parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities, more and more people stayed away[.]"[94]

Figure 5: Abandoned swimming pool that was a part of a recreational center in Camden, New Jersey, June 20, 1978. Photographed by Joe Del Palazzo. Courtesy of the George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Collection, Temple University Special Collections Research Center

Many whites had begun to stay away from public recreation spaces the moment they became truly public. In Atlanta, Georgia, daily attendance at the city's public swimming pools dropped by 50 percent following citywide desegregation in 1963. Nationwide, the growing demands and direct actions by Black Americans to enjoy equal access to public spaces resulted in white abandonment and retreat into privatized facilities, which set the stage for diminished public support for public recreation and the budget cuts that followed. Commenting on the rise of members-only private pools during this period, recreation scholar James Murphy noted that it

[92] NRPA, "Open Space and Recreation Opportunity in America's Inner Cities," 12.
[93] "Sick! Sick! Sick!," 13.
[94] Jay S. Shivers and Joseph W. Halper, *The Crisis in Urban Recreational Services* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981), 79.

"gained in popularity because it afforded the directors the opportunity to regulate and control the types of individuals permitted to swim. Almost without exception," he added, "these private facilities operated for the exclusive use of white citizens."[95]

The budgetary cuts inflicted on urban parks only accelerated middle-class whites' retreat into private spaces. In the wake of the civil rights movement, open expressions of racism became muted in public discourse, and whites instead began to couch their avoidance of public parks and playgrounds where Black people congregated as rooted in fears of crime. White fears of crime far outpaced the actual threat of crime in these settings. A 1972 study by HUD found that "the amount of reported … [c]rimes in parks is substantially below popularly assumed levels." In fact, it added, "parks appear to be much safer than their surrounding areas in general."[96] Tellingly, the same study found that non-users of urban parks were twice as likely to believe that parks were inundated with crime than actual park users. Perception shaped reality, and African Americans disproportionately suffered the consequences, in the form of aggressive policing practices targeting Black youth in urban parks and outdoor settings, and in the austerity measures championed by white voters who had ceased to see any reason for supporting public recreation spaces and services they no longer used.

Disinvestment in public recreation grew even more extreme following the tax revolts of the late 1970s. In 1978, voters in California passed Proposition 13, which slashed local property tax rates and placed strict limits on future tax increases. The referendum dramatically reduced taxes for homeowners and revenue for local governments and set in motion a wave of similar legislation and voter initiatives in other states. Historians attribute the tax revolt that began in California and swept across the nation as a key factor in the rise of the conservative movement and election of Ronald Reagan as President in 1980.[97]

Passage of Proposition 13 forced local governments in California to slash budgets and eliminate scores of programs and services. Most localities cut parks and recreation budgets first. San Francisco closed dozens of recreation centers and swimming pools. Los Angeles enacted an immediate 14 percent cut in its Parks and Recreation budget and began laying off hundreds of employees. It cancelled the city's annual Festival in Black, a popular free event celebrating African American arts and culture held annually in MacArthur Park. The city's Summer Swim Instruction Program, previously free to all, was forced to introduce fees, as were the city's public swimming pools. Within a decade, Los Angeles had eliminated nearly 2,000 jobs in its parks and

[95] Murphy, "Egalitarianism and Separatism," 120.
[96] Harold Lewis Malt Associates, "An Analysis of Public Safety as Related to the Incidence of Crime in Parks and Recreation Areas in Central Cities" (Washington, DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1972), 41.
[97] Robert Kuttner, *Revolt of the Haves: Tax Rebellions and Hard Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980); Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1991); Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo, 2001); Isaac William Martin, *The Permanent Tax Revolt: How the Property Tax Transformed American Politics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Rick Perlstein, *Reaganland: America's Right Turn, 1976-1980* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020).

recreation department, closed 24 recreation centers, and eliminated supervisor positions from 77 city parks.[98]

Figure 6: Festival in Black at MacArthur Park. Los Angeles, August 5, 1977. Following passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, the Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation ended the annual free event. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library

The pain of austerity was not shared equally among all Californians. Following passage of Proposition 13, Los Angeles city officials required parks to charge fees for organized recreational activities. This allowed wealthier cities and neighborhoods to offset budget cuts by charging fees that residents could easily afford, while also enlisting private donors to support public parks and recreational programs. In wealthier, whiter parts of Los Angeles, some local parks actually saw their budgets increase as a result of post-Prop. 13 funding schemes. But in the city's working-class and predominantly Black neighborhoods, these budget cuts resulted in the

[98] "Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate" (1978), 119; "Taking Back the Parks," *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 1989; "Black Festival Is Called Off," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 13, 1978; "Swimming Pool Prices Adjusted," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 29, 1978; "Youths' Playtime Options Limited," *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1992; Tom Epstein, "L.A. County's Road to Recreational Apartheid," *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1989.

elimination of numerous recreational programs, while the introduction of fees resulted in sharp reductions in use of neighborhood swimming pools and other programs by local residents. Leisure studies scholar Jack Foley described the situation in California in the aftermath of Prop. 13 as amounting to "recreation apartheid."[99]

Cuts in summer and after-school recreational programs in Black and brown neighborhoods, critics argued, contributed to the rise of gangs and street crime among Los Angeles youth in the 1980s.[100] The elimination of park supervisor positions and summer and after-school youth recreational programs proved particularly devastating to underprivileged minority neighborhoods, especially when contrasted with the array of programs, amenities, and recreational workers staffing parks and playgrounds in white parts of the city. The film director John Singleton grew up in South Los Angeles in the 1970s and saw this dramatic change in public spending and priorities firsthand. "I can remember being able to go to the park when I was a kid, and there would always be a park supervisor there. You could check out a basketball or a baseball or whatever. [But] after certain laws were passed here in this country—the Reagan administration and Proposition 13 here in Los Angeles County—tax money didn't go towards park supervisors or anything, and social programs and stuff was being taken away. And I could see that, you know? So what does a park become then? The park becomes a turf. It doesn't become a recreational facility."[101]

By the early 1980s, Black parents in Los Angeles began admonishing their children to avoid public parks in their own neighborhoods, many of which had been effectively abandoned by the city and taken over by criminal gangs. These "dead parks," as they came to be known, proliferated across Los Angeles's disinvested Black and brown neighborhoods in the years following Prop. 13. "We're creating children who are hostile and angry—and we're doing it by policy," Los Angeles's director for youth development Olivia Mitchell bemoaned. "The libraries aren't open ... We tell young people they can't hang out at the rec center because we don't have enough money to hire staff... I think, sooner or later, we're going to pay a big price for all of this neglect."[102]

For Black Americans, the "golden age" of public recreation began late and ended early. No sooner had the Black freedom struggle succeeded in making public parks, beaches, swimming pools, and playgrounds open to the entire public, many white families withdrew into private spaces, while white voters sparked a political revolution that resulted in the elimination of

[99] "New Fees Fail to Cover Big Proposition 13 Losses," *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 1983; David Johnston, "The Dead Parks: Insufficient Funding, Drugs and Violence Drive Many Away from City Recreation Areas," *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 1987; "Recreation Is More than Fun and Games," *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1994; J. Foley and H. Pink, "Taking Back the Parks: Addressing Recreational Apartheid," *Leisure Watch* 5, no. 3 (1992): 1–5.
[100] Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London: Verso, 1990), 308–9.
[101] Tom Epstein, "L.A. County's Road to Recreational Apartheid," *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1989; "'Fresh Air' Remembers 'Boyz N The Hood' Director John Singleton," *Fresh Air*, May 3, 2019, https://www.npr.org/2019/05/03/719986809/fresh-air-remembers-boyz-n-the-hood-director-john-singleton.
[102] David Johnston, "The Dead Parks: Insufficient Funding, Drugs and Violence Drive Many Away from City Recreation Areas," *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 1987; "Youths' Playtime Options Limited," *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1992.

recreational spaces, services, and programs or introduction of ever-escalating fees for what was once available to all for free. Massive cuts to public spending on recreation accelerated the commodification of outdoor recreation, as local governments scrambled to monetize public recreational assets and generate revenue from servicing their constituents' recreational needs. Whether by circumstance or design, the effect was the re-segregation of outdoor recreation space by income and race, deprivation of safe and accessible places of play among poor and minorities, and broader retreat from the promise of public recreation in building a multi-racial democratic society.

Chapter Six

"Don't Sell Out": Race, Recreation, and Conservation in Post-Civil Rights America (1970–2020)

Set in the leisure and recreational playground of 1990s coastal Florida, the 2002 film *Sunshine State,* directed by John Sayles, tells the story of the fictional Lincoln Beach, a historically Black beach community, and its threatened demise at the hands of a powerful corporate real estate developer. Working with pro-growth local officials and slyly enlisting a young African American to do its bidding, the developer works to amend local zoning ordinances and buy out the long-time residents so as to transform the area into a private gated community.

The story of the fictional Lincoln Beach is based on the real-life story of Florida's American Beach (Resort, ocean; Beach) and its protracted struggle against the Amelia Island Plantation Company in the 1980s and 1990s. The film also captures the growing nostalgia amongst African Americans over the world that Black people built in the face of Jim Crow and were rapidly losing in the decades since its demise.[1] In one scene, a long-time resident fighting to save Lincoln Beach from a corporate takeover explained the meaning and significance of this and other Black leisure spaces and commercial enterprises to a younger Black man born after Jim Crow:

> Forties, fifties, Lincoln Beach was it. All of the oceanfront in three counties we were allowed to step onto. Black folks—I'm talking about the pillars of the community—got together and bought this land. Built the houses. You drive through a couple hundred miles of redneck sheriffs, park your car right on the Boardwalk, step out, and just breathe. Over there was Henry's Lounge. That place used to jump.
>
> —*So, what happened?*
>
> Civil rights happened. Progress. Used to be you're black, you buy black. Jim Crow days you need your shoes shined, you wanted a taxi ride to the train station, wanted some ribs, a fish sandwich, chances are a black man owned the place you got it in. Now, the drive-thrus serve anybody. But, who owns them? Not us. All our people does is wearin' them paper hats and dippin' out them fries. The only thing we got left are funeral parlors and barber shops.
>
> —*Yeah, but now we can do anything.*

[1] In his essay "The Chitlin Circuit," scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. characterized the burgeoning nostalgia over Black life under Jim Crow as "sentimental separatism," a "romantic attempt to retrieve an imaginary community in the wake of what seems to be a disintegration of a real one." See Henry Louis Gates Jr., "The Chitlin Circuit," in *African-American Performance and Theater History: A Critical Reader,* eds. Harry J. Elam Jr. and David Krasner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 131. See also Michelle R. Boyd, *Jim Crow Nostalgia: Reconstructing Race in Bronzeville* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

> Them that get over, can do fine. Them that can't, are in a world of trouble.[2]

By the mid-1970s, scores of Black recreational spaces created under Jim Crow had already disappeared, while many others were struggling to survive. As African Americans' vacation options widened following desegregation, many families stopped venturing to Black resorts in favor of places where they had formerly been excluded or made to feel unwelcome. "After integration," longtime Highland Beach (Resort, bay) resident Ray Langston remarked, "this was the last place in the world [young African Americans] wanted to go. They'd been coming here since they were children…. It was very dead, very few people here on the weekends."[3] "First we had segregation, and then integration. Then disintegration," Idlewild's township supervisor Norm Burns lamented.[4]

The Struggles of Black Recreational Spaces after Desegregation

Black-owned commercial amusements and summer venues struggled in the face of shrinking crowds and dwindling revenue.[5] Many of the outdoor amusement parks and concert venues that, as late as the 1960s, attracted throngs of pleasure seekers and some of the era's most popular soul and R&B performers were, by the mid-1970s, shuttered. Many summer campgrounds for Black children and rural retreats for families were also forced to close operations due to lack of funding or revenue. In Colorado, Wink's Lodge (Resort, mountain) closed following the death of its founder, Obrey Wendell "Winks" Hamlet in 1965. Since its opening in 1928, the lodge had been the center of social life at the Black rural resort Lincoln Hills (Resort, mountain), hosting campers, family reunions, and traveling Black musicians, writers, and performers. His death coincided with the opening of campgrounds and other venues in the Rocky Mountain West to African Americans, and Hamlet's family opted not to continue operations.[6] Declining numbers of campers and donor support forced Massachusetts's Camp Atwater (Campground), the nation's oldest summer camp for Black youth, to cease operations following the 1973 season.[7] Funding cuts to federal anti-poverty programs in the 1970s also dealt a severe blow to camping programs that targeted underprivileged urban Black youth. Camp Mueller (Campground) in northeast Ohio was forced to make desperate appeals to donors and the public for support to continue offering its programs and services after the cessation of federal grants programs it had relied on.[8]

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[2] *Sunshine State,* DVD, directed by John Sayles (Culver City, CA: Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment, 2002). See also Tim Libretti, "Integration as Disintegration: Remembering the Civil Rights Movement as a Struggle for Self-Determination in John Sayles's *Sunshine State*," in *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory,* eds. Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 197–219. For another fictional work that employs the story of a Black leisure space in the years following desegregation to explore meanings of ownership, community, progress, and loss in modern-day Black America, see Toni Morrison, *Love* (New York: Viking, 2003).

[3] Andrew W. Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours: African American Beaches from Jim Crow to the Sunbelt South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 3.

[4] Lewis Walker and Benjamin C. Wilson, *Black Eden: The Idlewild Community* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002), 131.

[5] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours,* 219–222, 233–234.

[6] "Lincoln Hills," *Colorado Encyclopedia*, August 29, 2016, https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/lincoln-hills.

[7] "Top Camp for Black America," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 16, 1980.

[8] "An Acute Need for Camperships," *Cleveland Call and Post*, July 7, 1973. Today, Camp Mueller is located within Cuyahoga Valley National Park on a private inholding protected by a conservation easement.

Often under-insured, few Black-owned recreational and entertainment venues and resorts could afford to rebound and rebuild after suffering property damage or destruction resulting from storms or other disasters. Major hurricanes that struck the Atlantic and Gulf coasts during these years proved especially devastating to Black-owned resorts and commercial enterprises. Hurricane Hazel, which slammed coastal Carolina in October 1954, destroyed the popular Black seaside resort Bop City (Resort, ocean), north of the whites-only vacation town Carolina Beach, North Carolina. For the next decade, its owners waged an uphill, and ultimately unsuccessful, fight to rebuild and revitalize their seaside property. Neighboring Seabreeze (Resort, ocean), which had attracted crowds by the thousands during its heyday in the 1940s, also suffered devastating property damage from Hazel, and many of its small businesses never returned.[9] Hurricane Dora, which struck the Atlantic coast in 1964, leveled dozens of homes and businesses in American Beach in north Florida, hastening the resort community's decline in subsequent years.[10] Hurricane Camille, which hit the Gulf coast as a Category Five storm in 1969, leveled much of the Gulfside Assembly (Resort, ocean) in Waveland, Mississippi. Twenty-six buildings were completely destroyed, while the four structures that survived the storm suffered severe damage.[11]

Figure 1: Aerial View Overlooking American Beach, 1989. Courtesy of the State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

[9] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours,* 176–177. Following desegregation, Seabreeze lost many of its regular summer visitors and in later years more structures were destroyed or damaged by hurricanes. Despite this, the community maintained a number of year-long residents though disputes about property ownership in the community have arisen.
[10] "American Beach Is Nationally Acclaimed," *Jacksonville Free Press*, July 29, 1998.
[11] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours,* 241. Hurricane Katrina destroyed every structure at Gulfside in 2005. In 2015, an open-air chapel was constructed and the United Methodist Church is considering other plans for the site.

The financial hardships facing under-capitalized Black leisure and recreational enterprises in a post-Jim Crow economy became sources of profit for real estate speculators, who exploited the compromised positions of many Black property owners and small businesses in burgeoning vacation destinations to acquire real estate at below-market value. During the 1970s and 1980s, scores of Black beach resorts, outdoor entertainment venues, and rural retreats were acquired (often under dubious circumstances) by corporate developers and turned into golf courses, gated communities, hotels, and time-share resorts attracting a largely middle- and upper-middle-class, and disproportionately white, clientele. By the mid-1970s, Carrs and Sparrows Beaches (Resort, bay; Amusement Park) outside of Annapolis had closed and the African American family that owned the land sold it to investors who subsequently redeveloped the site into a high-end gated community and marina. Similarly, Bay Shore Beach (Resort, bay; Amusement Park) in Hampton, Virginia, was forced to close in the early 1970s after suffering years of declining revenue. The land was later sold to a developer and turned into a gated community. Neither site bears any resemblance to its former use or any recognition that these were once two of the most popular summertime destinations for African Americans living in the mid-Atlantic region during segregation.[12]

By the early 1970s the recreational lot and second home development industry was generating $6 billion in annual profits. In 1971 alone Americans purchased over 650,000 recreational lots at sites scattered across the US (but mainly in the Southeast, Southwest, and Rocky Mountains) at a total cost of $5.5 billion. By 1973 an estimated 10,000 companies were in the business of subdividing rural land and marketing vacation home properties. By 1976, one in twelve families in America owned a recreational property, up to one-half of these owners having bought it as a speculative investment.[13]

From its inception, the recreational land development industry was plagued with charges of investor fraud, consumer deception, and reckless environmental actions.[14] In some instances, African American landowners and historically Black communities were the victims of predatory land grabbing schemes by developers in burgeoning vacationlands. In other instances, Black families were the chief targets of marketers of undeveloped lots in new subdivisions. At Luxton Lake (Resort, lake) in upstate New York, a white Brooklyn-based developer acquired and subdivided a portion of undeveloped land along the lake in the late 1960s. Looking to capitalize on the existing community of Black families who lived or owned second homes along the lake, the developer began aggressively marketing lot sales in Black neighborhoods in New York City. Black New Yorkers were offered free bus rides to the lake, where the developer applied high-pressure tactics to convince families to buy. Lot buyers later complained about deceptive contract terms and the developer's failure to provide advertised services and amenities, such as

[12] See Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours,* 219–221, 233–237.
[13] See U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Subdividing Rural America: Impacts of Recreational Lot and Second Home Development* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 34, 36.
[14] See, for example, Morton C. Paulson, *The Great Land Hustle* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1972); Vince Conboy, *Exposé: Florida's Billion Dollar Land Fraud* (Naples, FL: Conboy, 1972); Frank Browning, *The Vanishing Land: Corporate Theft of America's Soil* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); Leonard Downie Jr., *Mortgage on America: The Real Cost of Real Estate Speculation* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974); Anthony Wolff, *Unreal Estate* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1973).

tennis courts and golf courses that were never built, and roads within the subdivision that remained unpaved and nearly impassable.[15]

Ultimately, though, it was the actions of another real estate developer in the area that would spell the demise of the Black summer vacation community on what was affectionately known as Lucky Lake. In 1981, the local planning board granted approval for a 400-acre parcel development on the southeastern shore of the lake. During the course of clearing the land, the developer, International Land Sales, spent months driving heavy machinery over a dam that supplied the lake's water, causing structural damage. In the fall of 1981, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Dam Safety Commission found that the dam was unsafe and required reconstruction. The developer refused to do the work, and a standoff ensued. The following spring, heavy rains overtopped the dam, threatening homes and roads downstream. After dam safety inspectors discovered a massive and growing crack in the dam's foundation, it ordered the dam be breached. Overnight, the water level on Luxton Lake plummeted. Year-round and seasonal residents watched in horror as the lake that had been a source of pleasure and recreation and the center of their community (not to mention the source of their property's value) disappeared. Michelle Berry, whose family moved to Luxton Lake from New York City in the late 1960s, "in order," in her words, "to provide me with a cleaner, safer environment," recalled the pain she and her family felt as the lake's waters drained. "A part of me died that day," Berry wrote, "right along with my father's spirit. Shortly after, my dad got very ill and later died from cancer, that I know in my bones was from his immense grief. He said to me, 'God, shug, even when you leave white people alone, it doesn't matter, they can still destroy what you love.'" The Luxton Lake Property Owners' Association filed a $20 million lawsuit against the town of Tusten and the developer, alleging that their actions and negligence led to the loss of their property's values, but were unsuccessful. In the years that followed, many families abandoned their homes and stopped visiting the area during the summer. "[O]ur beautiful community," one that once was the summer home for famous jazz musicians and athletes, and scores of middle-class Black families looking to provide their children with the opportunity to "explore … the beauty in nature and in each other[,]" Berry wrote, "was destroyed once the lake was drained."[16]

Other historically Black vacation and resort communities began to experience an influx of white property owners during these years. Often, though, these buyers came not with the intention of becoming a part of an existing community, but instead sought to acquire lakeside or beachfront lots at a discount, tear down the existing structures, and build newer and larger homes. Changes to local zoning laws and infrastructure often preceded and spurred changes to the built environment and social fabric of many historically Black communities. In Anne Arundel County, Maryland, home to Highland Beach and several other Black resort communities situated along the Chesapeake, Black summer resident John Moses recalled how, beginning in the late 1970s, "the county [began] pushing the sewers, really pushing the sewers. And I thought about it, and said, 'Those sewers are not for the people who live here. Those sewers are for the [developers].' … They follow sewer lines just like ants follow a trail of sugar." Later, county officials passed

[15] "Blacks Charge Developer Failed to Keep Promises," *Times Herald Record*, September 29, 1972.
[16] Michelle Courtney Berry, "Water over the Dam—the Story of Luxton Lake," *The River Reporter*, April 17, 1986; Tina Spangler, *Lucky Lake*, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsG4YKsGpcE.

sweeping zoning changes that allowed for the construction of large homes on small lots. Following these changes, property values skyrocketed, and along with it, property taxes, forcing many longtime homeowners to sell. Buyers rarely moved into older homes, but instead bulldozed and rebuilt.[17]

The unique characteristics of many historically Black summer communities—rustic, heavily wooded, comparatively underdeveloped—further enhanced their appeal to investors and developers. As real estate prices soared in places like the eastern end of Long Island or Maryland's western shore, investors looked to the underdeveloped lots and modest homes of Black summer communities like Sag Harbor (Resort, ocean) or Highland Beach as opportunities to profit from growing demand. Indeed, the real estate investment cycles that fueled—and continue to fuel—urban gentrification, causing displacement of long-time residents and diminishing the character of neighborhoods, were not unique to urban markets. “I feel like I’m being strangled,” Highland Beach homeowner Jean Wilder Cooper told a reporter in 1991 as they passed rows of new, multi-story homes where small cottages surrounded by forests once stood.[18] In Sag Harbor, long-time residents reported being inundated with letters inquiring about their interest in selling their homes. “[I]t’s beginning to feel like a takeover," one longtime property owner in Sag Harbor Hills remarked.[19]

Other Black resort towns saw their physical footprint dwindle as corporate-owned resorts consolidated landholdings and expanded in size, often with the help of pro-growth local governments. At American Beach, the declining fortunes of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company led it to sell sections of its seaside holdings beginning in the 1980s.[20] These sales were not enough to save the company from ruin. In 1987, the venerable Black-owned insurer declared bankruptcy and in 1991 went out of business.[21] By then, American Beach was a shell of its former self.[22] Most of its restaurants, lodges, and night clubs had closed. The beach remained a popular draw for Black families from the Jacksonville region. But, in a pattern replicated in cities and towns across the U.S., Nassau County during these years slashed its recreational budget as growing numbers of white families stopped using public facilities once they became open to the general public and not exclusive to whites only. In 1990, the county cut funding for lifeguards on this and other public beaches. In June 1994, the predictable result of austerity happened when five people drowned while swimming at American Beach.[23] During these same years, land purchases by developers shrank American Beach by one-half of its original size, down to 70 acres.[24]

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[17] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours,* 232.
[18] Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours,* 232.
[19] Troy McMullen, “Historically Black Beach Enclaves Are Fighting to Save Their History and Identity,” *Washington Post*, July 27, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/realestate/surf-sand-and-race/2017/07/26/f674c5be-61bb-11e7-84a1-a26b75ad39fe_story.html.
[20] Michelle Nijhuis, “Madame Butterfly,” *Sierra*, October 2005.
[21] Russ Rymer, “Integration’s Casualties: Segregation Helped Black Business. Civil Rights Helped Destroy It,” *New York Times*, November 1, 1998.
[22] Rymer, “Beach Lady,” *Smithsonian*, June 2003, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/beach-lady-84237022/.
[23] “‘No-Lifeguard’ Policy Challenged,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 2, 1994.
[24] “Mavynee Betsch American Beach, Florida: An Oceanfront Community Under Siege by Developers,” *About ... Time*, May 31, 1996.

By the late 1990s, the two dozen families who lived in American Beach year-round, and the families who still owned seasonal cottages there, felt surrounded, their days numbered.[25] To the north, the balconies of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel stared down on beachgoers. To the south sat a massive, gated resort, the Amelia Island Plantation, its corporate owners seemingly determined to claim what remained of American Beach. In the mid-1990s, the resort purchased 80 acres of undeveloped forest land, which it subsequently bulldozed and turned into fairways and new homes. Later, it placed a large, unsightly warehouse adjacent to American Beach's main entrance. One American Beach resident said of the developer's actions: "It's like being spit on."[26]

While some places disappeared, seemingly overnight, and others battled against developers and public officials, still others transitioned from Black vacationlands into multi-racial and ethnic year-round communities. Beginning in the late 1960s, the resort community of Val Verde (Resort) (informally known as the "Black Palm Springs") outside of Los Angeles, California, experienced a gradual decline in the number of Black families venturing there for leisure and recreation. Some Black homeowners retired to their vacation homes, turning what had formerly been a leisure setting into an informal Black retirement community. Many others sold their homes to working-class families, predominantly Latinx, looking for more affordable housing options. Today, Val Verde exists as an ethnically and economically mixed, year-round community, with some Black families who had bought property there during the Jim Crow era remaining, but with little visual evidence or public recognition of its past.[27]

Other places experienced a slow decline in the numbers of visitors and steady deterioration in physical conditions. By the 1970s, summer crowds at Idlewild (Resort, lake) in northern Michigan had fallen sharply from its heyday in the 1950s. As the town's population shrank, property values (and tax revenues) plummeted, and town officials struggled to maintain basic services, much less invest in the town's infrastructure. Break-ins of homes, fires, and petty crimes spiked. "As people were beginning to stop vacationing there," historian Ronald Stephens found, "Idlewild's economy began to weaken, as buildings went uncared for, some vacationers stopped visiting, and many of its historic structures were abandoned and torn down."[28] Conflicts over the future of historically Black beach and resort towns among residents grew in intensity and duration.[29]

The level of interest among real estate developers in Black-owned property and Black space shaped the dynamics and often the outcome of these disputes. In that respect, the community of

[25] Rymer, "Beach Lady."
[26] "A Black Beach Town Fights to Preserve Its History," *New York Times*, April 6, 1998.
[27] Alison Rose Jefferson, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 179–217.
[28] Ronald J. Stephens, *Idlewild: The Rise, Decline, and Rebirth of a Unique African American Resort Town* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 232.
[29] The residents of Atlantic Beach, S.C., for example, became mired in conflicts over development, preservation, and political representation throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Political conflict scuttled several Black-led real estate development initiatives and kept the town locked in a state of decay, with much of the town's built environment suffering from neglect and deterioration during these decades. See P. Nicole King, *Sombreros and Motorcycles in a Newer South: The Politics of Aesthetics in South Carolina's Tourism Industry* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 113–49.

Idlewild was saved from complete destruction and disappearance. The same was the case for many other summer communities along rural lakes in the Midwest. Places like Fox Lake (Resort, lake) in northern Indiana, Lake Ivanhoe (Resort, lake) in southern Wisconsin, Lake Placid (Resort, lake) in the Missouri Ozarks, or Lake Adney (Resort, lake) in north central Minnesota maintained their historically Black identities and physical characteristics into the post-Jim Crow era, even as the number of African American families and groups who vacationed or owned homes in these places were significantly smaller than before.[30] Fox Lake continued to host gatherings of fraternal organizations, church groups, and alumni associations and, Ronald Stephens writes, "serve as a flourishing black family-centered resort community" into the 1990s and beyond.[31] Because northeast Indiana never experienced the levels of population and economic growth witnessed in many areas of the coastal South, Fox Lake property owners never experienced the intense pressure to sell, nor was the area subject to coordinated efforts to redevelop, that befell other historically Black summer communities. As a result, several of the cottages and homes built along the lake in the early to mid-twentieth century still stand today.[32]

Black Faces in White Spaces

In the decades following desegregation, large Black social gatherings were increasingly being held in locations that had once barred African Americans or relegated them to second-class treatment. At historically white resorts and vacation destinations, gatherings of Black professional organizations, fraternities and sororities, and family reunions mingled alongside white vacationers and tourists. If the scheduling of large gatherings in these spaces carried symbolic significance, African Americans' treatment by local officials, law enforcement, and proprietors served as a painful, and infuriating, reminder that the struggle to enjoy recreation without humiliation remained unfinished.

Attendees at annual Black events, gatherings, and celebrations regularly experienced mistreatment and harassment from white businesses, local governments, and law enforcement. Cities imposed exorbitant vendor and permit fees on Black street festivals and gatherings. Hotels charged Black groups higher room rates while providing inferior service. Police routinely harassed Black groups enjoying leisure in these historically white spaces and often treated Black social gatherings as a threat to public order rather than a legitimate and lawful activity that, ironically, generated the economic activity and tax revenues many of these localities had come to depend on. In Virginia Beach, Virginia, for example, an annual Labor Day gathering of Black

[30] "Lake Ivanhoe an African-American Landmark," *Journal Times*, February 17, 2001, https://journaltimes.com/news/local/lake-ivanhoe-an-african-american-landmark/article_6eeb87f0-33da-5b44-b34e-e97e9c4b233c.html; "Lake Ivanhoe Offers Its Own Unique History," *Lake Geneva Regional News*, February 6, 2019, https://www.lakegenevanews.net/opinion/columnists/lake-ivanhoe-offers-its-own-unique-history/article_a68e9681-8b45-5cac-8270-21060e6842da.amp.html; Gary R. Kremer and Evan P. Orr, "Lake Placid: 'A Recreational Center for Colored People in the Missouri Ozarks,'" in *The Ozarks in Missouri History: Discoveries in an American Region* (Columbia, United States: University of Missouri Press, 2013); Neil Tucker, *Welcome to Lake Placid, Missouri*, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ev9wRfkAa0.

[31] Ronald J. Stephens, "Fox Lake, Angola, Indiana (1927–)," February 4, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/fox-lake-angola-indiana-1927/; Claudia Polley, "Fox Lake: A Resort Like Many Others," *Cultural Resource Management* 20, no. 2 (1997): 55.

[32] "Fox Lake," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/132004815.

fraternities and sororities known as Greekfest drew upwards of 100,000 people to hotels and restaurants along the city's boardwalk in the late 1980s. As the event's popularity grew, so too did negative encounters between Black revelers and law enforcement. On Labor Day weekend in 1989, Black fraternity and sorority members experienced a barrage of mistreatment and harassment from state and local law enforcement deployed for the event. Throughout the weekend, guests reported being ticketed for petty violations such as jaywalking, playing radios, loud talking, and blocking traffic, and being called "boy" and having riot sticks shoved in their chests unprovoked. Tensions boiled over when word spread among the crowds that the oceanfront hotels where the groups were staying had charged guests three times the normal rate while refusing to provide guests with housekeeping services. Following reports of vandalism and property damage to businesses along the boardwalk, the city imposed a curfew and the state's governor deployed 600 members of the Virginia National Guard. Over the next 48 hours, numerous Black students suffered beatings and arrests. Two students were shot and over 160 persons were arrested.[33]

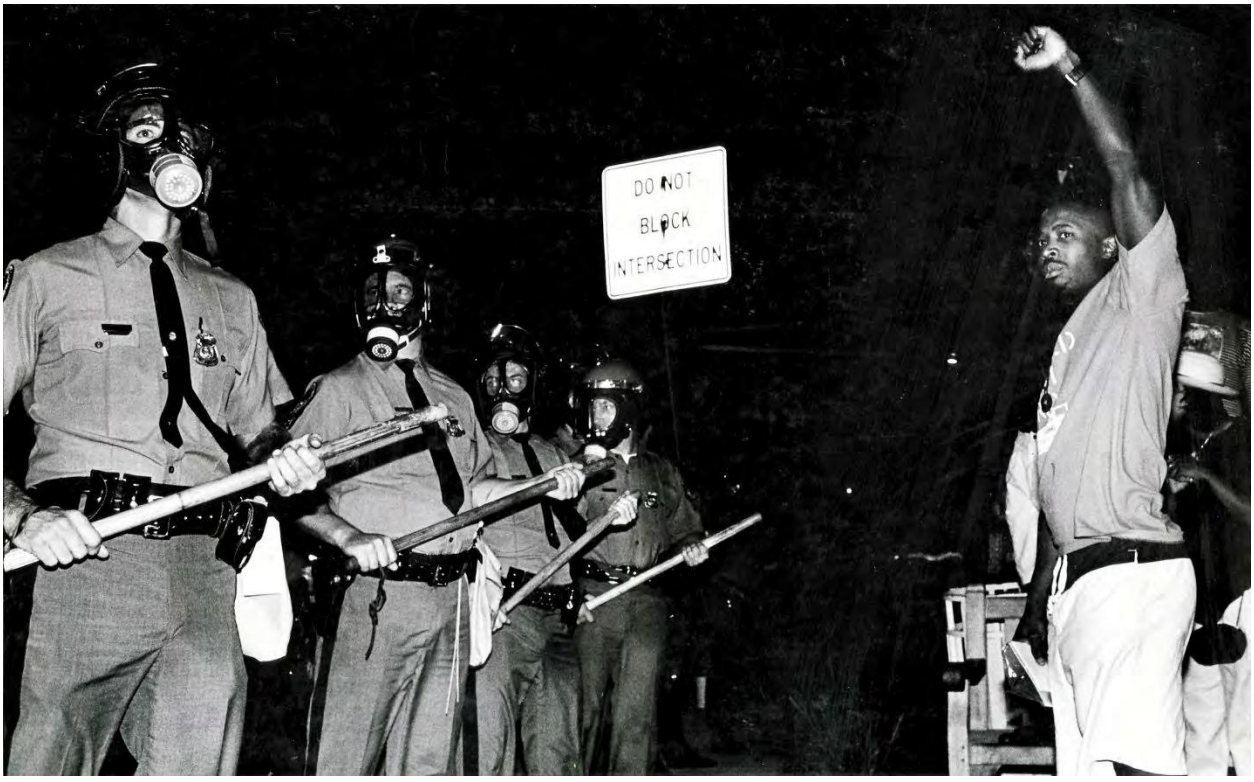

Figure 2: Police in riot gear at Greekfest in Virginia Beach, 1989. Courtesy of the Virginian-Pilot

Following the events of the 1989 Labor Day weekend, other cities that hosted annual gatherings and events that attracted large numbers of younger African Americans doubled-down on repressive measures. In Atlanta, Georgia, officials adopted measures that, critics charged, aimed to discourage attendance at the popular annual gathering of Black college students known as "Freaknik" (such as refusing to issue entertainment permits or provide portable toilets, and

[33] Andrew Kahrl, "Sunbelt by the Sea: Governing Race and Nature in a Twentieth-Century Coastal Metropolis," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 3 (2012): 488–508.

closing public parks), while many white-owned businesses closed during the weekend.[34] In 1999, the U.S. Justice Department filed a lawsuit on behalf of a group of African Americans who had come to Daytona Beach, Florida, for an annual Black College Reunion gathering against the Adam's Mark Hotel after the guests had been charged higher rates than white guests, segregated into a separate and inferior section of the hotel, and forced to wear special wrist bands during their stay. The Justice Department alleged that the hotel's actions fit a corporate pattern of racial discrimination against Black guests and Black-sponsored events. The Adam's Mark Hotel agreed to pay an $8 million fine and make policy changes.[35]

Annual events held at historically Black leisure destinations also became subject to official censure and police harassment. Beginning in the mid-1990s, elected officials and white-owned businesses in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, sought to restrict and later ban an annual gathering of Black motorcycle riders in the neighboring Black seaside town of Atlantic Beach (Resort, ocean). Invoking racist stereotypes of Black gatherings as inherently unruly, Myrtle Beach Mayor Mark McBride claimed that the Black bike riders "held [the predominantly white residents of Myrtle Beach] hostage to a cacophony of unwanted noise [and] aberrant public behavior" and called for a public referendum to ban the annual Black festival. Beginning in 1998, Myrtle Beach adopted a series of aggressive measures aimed at discouraging Black attendance, including road closures and increased police presence. The public attacks and deluge of negative press coverage of the annual Black gathering stood in contrast to the relative silence over the numerous instances of violence that erupted each spring during Myrtle Beach's own (white) biker festival.[36] In 2003, a group of Black bike riders filed a class-action lawsuit against the town, alleging racial discrimination in its handling of the separate white and Black gatherings, which was eventually settled in 2006 when a federal judge ordered the town maintain the same traffic patterns during both festivals.[37]

Conservation for Whom?

Major environmental and outdoor recreation organizations remained indifferent to the harassment of African Americans in formerly white outdoor spaces and the environmental inequities many Black communities were forced to endure. The largest environmental and conservationist organizations remained dominated by whites, at both the leadership and membership levels, and remained hostile to even addressing the lack of diversity within the movements. The Los Angeles chapter of the Sierra Club continued a practice of not inviting its Black and Jewish members to meetings and parties into the late 1960s. When, in response, members of the Sierra Club's San Francisco chapter put a resolution expressing disapproval of racial discrimination and exclusion to a vote, members voted it down. In defending his vote against the measure, director Bestor Robinson remarked, "[T]his is not an integration club; this is

[34] Regina Austin, "'Not Just for the Fun of It!': Governmental Restraints on Black Leisure, Social Inequality, and the Privatization of Public Space," *Southern California Law Review* 71 (1998): 681.
[35] Perry L. Carter, "Coloured Places and Pigmented Holidays: Racialized Leisure Travel," *Tourism Geographies* 10, no. 3 (2008): 279; Derek Catron, "Adam's Mark Settles Discrimination Suits," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 22, 2000.
[36] "Myrtle Beach Bike Fests Net More Arrests Than Similar Events," *Myrtle Beach Sun News,* May 10, 1999; Kawan Pawling, letter to the editor, *Myrtle Beach Sun News,* May 23, 1999; Jackson Burke, letter to the editor, *Myrtle Beach Sun News,* June 1, 1997.
[37] See King, *Sombreros and Motorcycles in a Newer South,* 150–80.

a conservation club."[38] The issues and concerns the Sierra Club placed at the top of its agenda reflected those of its predominantly white membership. In 1978, for example, it publicly opposed plans by the U.S. Interior Department to redirect portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to address the needs of urban areas.[39]

To the majority of white Americans, protecting the environment still meant protecting the natural spaces where white people went. In contrast, scholar and activist Nathan Hare wrote, "blacks and their environmental interests have been so blatantly omitted that blacks and the ecology movement currently stand in contradiction to each other."[40] In his pathbreaking 1970 essay "Black Ecology," Hare leveled a searing critique of the mainstream environmental movement's singular emphasis on issues of concern to middle-class white Americans—"clean water, for boating, for swimming, and fishing—and clean water just to look at," he derisively remarked—and its comparative lack of concern for the ecological crises gripping Black communities.[41] Hare called attention to the environmental degradation of urban neighborhoods from industrial pollution: the soot, smoke, dust, ash, fumes, gases. He spoke of the health hazards from rats and cockroaches Black families who were forced to live in dilapidated urban housing faced. And he reflected on the psychological impact of living in loud, overcrowded, unsanitary, and dangerous environments.[42] Hare's concept of "Black ecology" aimed to not only inject Black perspectives into environmentalists' concerns but also transform public understandings of the ecological crisis, revealing how forms of environmental devastation were—and remain—inextricably bound to anti-Black racism and capitalism.[43]

The interests and concerns of white Americans not only predominated in the environmental movement in the 1970s and 1980s, it also shaped the priorities of the National Park Service. Following its short-lived attempt to bring "parks to the people" in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the NPS fell back into a familiar pattern of catering to the interests of middle-class white Americans. Efforts to diversify park staff and park users stalled. Studies conducted during these years all found that National Parks suffered from under-use by African Americans and other non-white groups. A National Recreation Survey conducted between 1982 and 1983 found that 83 percent of racial and ethnic minorities reported never having visited a national park; only 42 percent of white respondents had never visited one. A study of visitors to five different federal recreation sites conducted between 1985 and 1987 found that 94 percent of all visitors were white. Parallel studies conducted during this same period also found that the very outdoor activities that NPS prioritized (camping, hiking and backpacking, canoeing and kayaking, wildlife observation) were also the outdoor activities that African Americans exhibited the lowest levels of participation.[44]

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[38] Stephen Fox, *John Muir and His Legacy* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1981), 349.
[39] Neal R. Peirce, "Time to Put Parks Where the People Are," *Washington Post*, February 17, 1978.
[40] Nathan Hare, "Black Ecology," *The Black Scholar* 1, no. 6 (1970): 2.
[41] Hare, "Black Ecology," 4.
[42] Hare, "Black Ecology," 4–5.
[43] Hare, "Black Ecology," 2–8.
[44] Myron F. Floyd, "Race, Ethnicity and Use of the National Park System," *Social Science Research Review* 1, no. 2 (1999): 6–7.

Researchers who studied Black under-use of national and state parks during these decades offered a range of explanations. Some concluded that these racial disparities merely reflected broader socioeconomic inequalities that made African Americans less likely to have the time, resources, and geographical proximity to outdoor nature than whites. Others pointed to different cultural norms that made Blacks less interested in the types of recreational activities national and state parks offered. Still others highlighted the historic and ongoing discrimination African Americans faced in outdoor rural spaces, the feelings of fear and danger wooded areas, in particular, evoked as the reason for Black under-use and avoidance.[45]

Several studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s suggested that inaccessibility, rather than indifference to outdoor nature, explained why so few Blacks ventured to rural state and national parks. One study of the Detroit metro area found that park usage patterns reflected residential patterns, with Blacks in Detroit far more likely than whites to use city parks (75 percent versus 48 percent in the survey), whereas whites were far more likely to visit regional parks located outside of the city (55.9 percent versus 37.3 percent), with lack of access to regional parks via public transportation a significant factor. A study conducted among residents of Cleveland, Ohio, also found that African Americans reported lack of access to regional parks via public transportation as a significant factor for their non-visitation of these sites.[46] Studies of Black under-use of national parks also cited distance and inaccessibility to major Black population centers as a significant factor.[47] Researchers noted that, at the time, many of the states with the largest African American populations (Delaware, Maryland, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and West Virginia) were also those with the fewest national parks.[48]

But it wasn't just inaccessibility that explained Black under-use. It was also how unwelcoming these sites could be to Black visitors. For one, parks in predominantly white rural areas were, not surprisingly, often staffed overwhelmingly by white people. The National Park Service, in particular, struggled to attract and retain Black park rangers in western states with small Black populations. As one Black park ranger commented, "when I was in [a large Western National Park], I was one of only two minorities employed in the park and we both left[, because] there's no people of color in the community, there's no people of color anywhere around, and not everyone's willing to stand out."[49] Black visitors to rural parks in predominantly white areas similarly reported feeling isolated and unsafe in these settings. One study found that African Americans were significantly more likely than whites to report experiencing racial conflict in rural parks.[50]

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[45] Floyd, "Race, Ethnicity and Use of the National Park System," 3–5.
[46] Floyd, "Race, Ethnicity and Use of the National Park System," 15.
[47] Joe Weber and Selima Sultana, "Why Do So Few Minority People Visit National Parks? Visitation and the Accessibility of 'America's Best Idea,'" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103, no. 3 (May 2013): 437–64.
[48] Latria Graham, "'We're Here. You Just Don't See Us.,'" *Outside*, May 1, 2018, https://www.outsideonline.com/2296351/were-here-you-just-dont-see-us.
[49] Drew Alan Cavin, "Understanding the Experiences of African American Outdoor Enthusiasts" (PhD diss., Texas A&M University, 2008), 92.
[50] Weber and Sultana, "Why Do So Few Minority People Visit National Parks?"

Other studies suggested that these experiences were not unique to rural spaces but rather common to outdoor recreational settings in which whites were the dominant visitors, including urban settings. One 1990s study of users of Lincoln Park in Chicago, located along the city's lakefront just north of the city's Loop and a magnet for white families from the suburbs and tourists, found that one in ten minority visitors reported experiencing discrimination, including verbal harassment, physical intimidation, and assaults at the hands of white visitors or law enforcement.[51] The study also found that African American visitors to Lincoln Park were far more likely to travel in groups rather than alone.[52] Other studies similarly found that when African Americans did use state parks and other majority-white public outdoor venues, they did so in groups and for social occasions like family reunions and sporting events, rather than for sightseeing, hiking, or other solitary activities.[53]

A history of white violence and terror in remote outdoor settings helps explain why. "We've had so many atrocious things happen to us in the woods," Leola McCoy of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, remarked.[54] Hiking trails and campgrounds that whites saw as adventurous, many Blacks viewed as dangerous. As one woman described, "When we told [fellow African American friends] that we were gonna go off and explore the woods and camp in the parks and forest, [they] went berserk[.] [T]hey were like 'are you nuts! Do you know what happens to black people in the woods?' 'You must be crazy.'"[55] Such reactions underscore the lasting legacy of white terrorism on Black perceptions of outdoor environments, as the scholar Carolyn Finney argues in her book *Black Faces, White Spaces*. "For African Americans traveling to and from outdoor areas, particularly parks and forests," Finney notes, "it is easier today than it was during the Jim Crow era[.] … But examples still persist that illustrate how spatial mobility for African Americans can be limited by lingering concern for their safety while crossing through territory deemed 'white.'"[56] In these historically white settings, Finney adds, many African Americans "experience insecurity, exclusion, and fear born out of historical precedent, collective memory, and contemporary concerns."[57]

Advertising and marketing for these sites, and of outdoor hiking in general, only reinforced Black perceptions that these were white activities and spaces. One study of photos in the magazine *Outside* found that, between 1991 and 2001, Black people only appeared in slightly over 100 of the over 4,600 images in which people appeared, and of those, most were of famous Black athletes. Finney found that none of the brochures for three National Parks in Florida, a state in which African Americans comprised over 15 percent of the overall population, featured any Black faces. The website for the American Hiking Society, likewise, only contained a single image of a Black person, and he was working, not relaxing or enjoying nature. Clothing and

[51] Floyd, "Race, Ethnicity and Use of the National Park System," 15.
[52] Janae Davis, "Black Faces, Black Spaces: Rethinking African American Underrepresentation in the Wildland Spaces and Outdoor Recreation," *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 2, no. 1 (2019): 91.
[53] Dennis Eugene Jones, "Spatial Patterns of Racial Participation at Previously Black State Parks in North Carolina" (Master's thesis, University of North Carolina, 1972), 15, 26–27.
[54] Carolyn Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 59.
[55] Cavin, "Understanding the Experiences of African American Outdoor Enthusiasts," 80.
[56] Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces,* 60.
[57] Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces,* 28.

hiking gear brands rarely featured Black people in their advertising. This, Finney notes, conveyed a message to Black people that they were not welcome in these spaces. "Many of the interviewees with whom I spoke were frustrated with the scarcity of images of African Americans in nature. When asked to recall images that they have seen of black people in outdoor settings, many respondents could not remember any images of black women outside or only images that showed a black person working."[58]

The predominance of white faces in advertising and promotion of outdoor recreation was by design. As outdoor sports became multimillion-dollar industries, advertising executives worked to cultivate a white consumer base through racialized images and appeals. None were more notorious in branding their sport as white than downhill snow skiing. Historian Annie Gilbert Coleman documented how the ski industry in the western United States actively worked to make the sport synonymous with Nordic and western European culture and render Black and non-Western skiers invisible. "Except for its manual labor and service employees, who are in many ways hidden from view, the ski industry has crafted unusually 'white' settings within the American West."[59] As a result, Blacks who did venture to these resorts felt, as Coleman aptly put it, the "unbearable whiteness of skiing."[60] As one Black skier remarked, "[When Blacks] come in numbers to the mountains, there is a reverse curiosity, [with] Whites going, 'oh my god, look at all these Blacks'. And some of it, I don't even want to call it racism, it's curiosity. 'I didn't know you could ski…' I've had that said to me[.]"[61] This, despite the fact that, by the 1980s, African Americans constituted a significant and growing percentage of downhill snow skiers in the U.S. By the mid-1990s, African Americans spent roughly $200 million annually on skiing. A reported 100,000 African Americans annually skied.[62] And yet, as Coleman found, Black people were virtually invisible in the sport's advertising.

But it was not only advertising and marketing that conveyed the message that Black people were unwelcome in certain outdoor settings and activities. It was also Blacks' own experiences doing these activities. Take jogging, for example. Beginning in the 1980s, jogging and outdoor running became a popular form of exercise. Not only did white people become the face of this activity, but racist depictions of Black men as violent criminals in media and industry publications rendered them a threat to joggers' safety. As historian Natalia Mehlman Petrzela writes, "Running has been a pastime marketed primarily to white people ever since 'the jogging craze' was born in the lily-white Oregon track and field world of the late 1960s. Black people have not only been excluded from the sport […] they've also been relentlessly depicted as a threat to legitimate, white joggers."[63] The criminalization of Blackness and the apparent threat Black people posed to white joggers was on tragic display in 1989, when five teenagers of color were wrongfully arrested and convicted for the assault and rape of a white female jogger in Central Park in New York City. (After serving sentences ranging from six to thirteen years, all five men

[58] Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces,* 78, 81, 85, 78, 79.
[59] Annie Gilbert Coleman, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Skiing," *Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (1996): 584.
[60] Coleman, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Skiing," 583–614.
[61] Cavin, "Understanding the Experiences of African American Outdoor Enthusiasts," 85.
[62] Coleman, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Skiing," 606.
[63] Natalia Mehlman Petrzela, "Jogging Has Always Excluded Black People," *New York Times*, May 12, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/opinion/running-jogging-race-ahmaud-arbery.html.

were exonerated in 2002.)[64] African American joggers, likewise, had to contend with police or armed whites mistaking them for a criminal running from the scene of a crime, rather than someone out getting some exercise. On February 23, 2020, an African American man named Ahmaud Arbery was murdered while running through a white neighborhood in Georgia by a group of white men who chased him down in their truck. The men later claimed to have acted in the belief that Arbery had committed a robbery.[65]

The Struggle to Preserve and Revitalize Historically Black Recreational Spaces

In the face of persistent racism and mistreatment in white-dominated leisure and recreational spaces and mounting losses of historic Black landmarks, African Americans have, in recent decades, worked to preserve, reclaim, and revitalize historically Black outdoor spaces that were founded during the age of segregation, and to incorporate Black experiences and perspectives into the burgeoning heritage tourism industry.

Seven years after it was forced to cease operations due to declining interest among African American families and children, Camp Atwater (Campground) launched a major fundraising campaign and reopened to summer campers in 1980. The reason, Springfield, Massachusetts, Urban League President Henry M. Thomas III explained, was growing recognition that such experiences were critical to the social and emotional development of African American youth in a desegregated world. The re-launched Camp Atwater offered campers programs in swimming and aquatics, arts and crafts, tennis, boating, and horseback riding, as well as programs in African history, theater, and dance. More than a summer camping experience, places like Camp Atwater sought to provide Black youth social and cultural training for life. Reflecting on the campers' experience, one writer remarked, "[F]or all the fun they had, these young people well understood they were readying themselves to compete in a society that looked upon African-Americans, no matter how well educated and qualified, with a cold indifference, if not outright hostility."[66]

While some historically Black resorts and campgrounds experienced a rebirth, other destinations steadily grew in popularity among African Americans. The Black summer cottage community on Martha's Vineyard (Resort, ocean), for example, has remained resilient in the face of growing summer crowds and demand for real estate on the island. The island's popularity among African Americans increased further when President Barack Obama and his family began vacationing there each summer during his presidency. In addition to Black families from the northeast who had long spent their summers in Oak Bluffs came growing numbers of African American families, fraternities and sororities, and other social groups from across the nation, who booked

[64] Susan Saulny, "Convictions and Charges Voided In '89 Central Park Jogger Attack," *New York Times*, December 20, 2002.; Gabrielle Bruney, "Netflix's 'When They See Us' Tells the Story of the Central Park Five. Here's a Timeline of the Real Events.," *Esquire*, May 31, 2019, https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/movies/a27652254/netflix-when-they-see-us-central-park-five-true-story/.
[65] Richard Fausset, "What We Know About the Shooting Death of Ahmaud Arbery," *New York Times*, February 28, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/article/ahmaud-arbery-shooting-georgia.html.
[66] "Atwater to Reopen," *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 23, 1980; "Top Camp for Black America," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 16, 1980; "Camp Atwater Serving Black Youth," *New York Amsterdam News*, June 27, 1981; Hugh B. Price, "Camp Atwater: Developing America's Future," *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 22, 2002.

reunions and gatherings on the island.[67] The island's growing popularity coincided with, and was further enhanced by, efforts to commemorate its African American history. In 1989, Elaine Weintraub, a schoolteacher on the island, and Carrie Camillo Tankard, the vice-president of the Martha's Vineyard chapter of the NAACP, began work on building a heritage trail across the island that told the story of African Americans' historical presence and role in shaping the island's history. Today, the Martha's Vineyard African American Heritage Trail has 30 designated sites and offers a robust cultural tourism and educational program and offers tours and holds workshops throughout the year.[68]

Figure 3: Photographer Michael Johnson stands beside a sign he created and installed at Inkwell Beach, Martha's Vineyard. Courtesy of Stacey Rupolo/*Martha's Vineyard Times*. "Signs of a Struggle at Inkwell by Brian Dowd of *Martha's Vineyard Times*. https://www.mvtimes.com/2018/06/06/signs-struggle-inkwell/.

While Black public history became an asset in some places, in others it became a matter of contention and conflict, as local communities struggled to come to terms with the history and legacy of white supremacy, racial segregation, and Black dispossession. For decades following its seizure by the city of Manhattan Beach, California, in 1924, the site formerly known as Bruce's Beach (Beach) sat idle and vacant, its non-use silent confirmation of the city's racist and expulsive objectives in invoking eminent domain to take the Bruce family's property. Beginning in 2003, after a civic organization proposed a contest to rename the site, the city and its residents engaged in a protracted debate over how to recognize and commemorate its history. Descendants of the Bruces along with members of the city's small African American community spoke

[67] Greg Jaffe, "Obama's Ever-Shrinking, Nearly Invisible Martha's Vineyard Vacation," *Washington Post*, August 20, 2015.
[68] "General Information & Mission Statement," The African-American Heritage Trail of Martha's Vineyard, August 27, 2016, https://mvafricanamericanheritagetrail.org/general-information-mission-statement/.

publicly in favor of restoring the name Bruce's Beach. Opponents argued that restoring the site's original name would only rekindle racial animosities and reflect negatively on the town's history.[69] One opponent sarcastically suggested that the park be renamed "Mea Culpa."[70] In 2006, the city council voted to rename the park Bruce's Beach.[71] But the debate over public memory of the site had only just begun, as residents and public officials battled over the wording of the text of the commemorative plaque at the site. In its final form, the plaque, as historian Alison Rose Jefferson notes, "made no mention of the nonviolent, but militant, NAACP civil rights agents of the 1920s who stood up in civil disobedience and whose actions aided in forcing the city government to discontinue discriminatory land leasing policies inhibiting African Americans" from accessing the city's shoreline. Instead, the plaque merely noted that Bruce's Beach was "the only beach in Los Angeles County for all people" while eliding the people and organizations who fought to make it that way, how it was taken away, and why.[72]

As public awareness of the historic injustice spread (thanks in no small measure to the work of public historians such as Alison Rose Jefferson), calls for justice for the descendants of Willa and Charles Bruce grew louder and more sustained. In March 2021, Los Angeles County supervisor Janice Hahn announced that her office was considering options for restorative justice for the Bruce family, including giving the land that the city had taken in 1924 back to the living descendants. Hahn called the town's seizure of the Bruce's land "an injustice inflicted upon not just Willa and Charles Bruce but generations of their descendants who would almost certainly be millionaires if they had been able to keep that beachfront property."[73]

Whether it was in preserving places in danger of being lost, recovering histories that many hoped to forget, or fending off land-hungry real estate developers and their allies in local government, local activists and preservationists (often women of color) have been at the center of efforts to preserve the history and identity of Black leisure sites in the post-civil rights era. Many historically Black resort and vacation communities have drawn on their area's history and utilized historic preservation as a defensive shield against displacement. At Highland Beach (Resort, bay), residents succeeded in having the Twin Oaks cottage, built for Frederick Douglass by his sons just prior to his death in 1895, placed on the National Register of Historic Places, a status that residents intended to further cement the community's status as a historically Black and

[69] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 52–60.
[70] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream,* 61.
[71] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream,* 65–66.
[72] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 68.
[73] "LA County May Return Beachfront Land Seized from Black Family a Century Ago," *The Guardian*, March 3, 2021, http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/mar/07/los-angeles-county-beachfront-land-black-family; Jacey Fortin, "This Black Family Ran a Thriving Beach Resort 100 Years Ago. They Want Their Land Back.," *New York Times*, March 11, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/11/us/bruce-family-manhattan-beach.html; Jacey Fortin, "California Beach Seized in 1924 From a Black Family Could Be Returned," *New York Times*, April 18, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/18/us/bruces-beach-manhattan-california.html.

culturally significant site.[74] In 2019, the collection of historically Black subdivisions in Sag Harbor (known collectively as SANS) received landmark status from the state of New York.[75]

Figure 4: "The Beach Lady." MaVynee Betsch in May of 1982. Courtesy of the Amelia Island Museum of History.

At American Beach, MaVynee Betsch, a classically trained opera singer and the great-granddaughter of the town's founder A. L. Lewis, led a crusade to save the historic community from further encroachment from corporate resorts beginning in the 1990s and continuing until her death in 2005. During those years, Betsch (who acquired the nickname "the Beach Lady") tirelessly lobbied county and state officials to designate the town as an historic site and protect it from further encroachment. She fired off letters to lawmakers and newspapers and gave speeches around the state. Her activism generated unprecedented coverage of the historic beach community and attention to the challenges facing this and other Black leisure spaces founded under segregation. In 1998, Ervin's Rest an oceanfront home at American Beach built in 1938 by Louis Dargan Ervin, a former vice president of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company, was added to the National Register of Historic Places (Ervin's Rest, NRHP, 1998). The following year, a new, Black-owned bed-and-breakfast opened in the town. In 2002, several acres of American Beach, which includes Ervin's Rest, was added to the National Register of Historic Places to form the American Beach Historic District (American Beach Historic District, NRHP, 2002). And in 2003, after a protracted dispute, the Amelia Island Plantation (the corporate resort

[74] Jamie Stiehm, "Frederick Douglass' 1895 Summer Home Is the Heart of Highland Beach," *Baltimore Sun*, August 16, 2005, https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-2005-08-16-0508160039-story.html. Today, Twin Oaks serves as the Frederick Douglass Museum and Cultural Center.

[75] Sandra E. Garcia, "On Long Island, a Beachfront Haven for Black Families," *New York Times*, October 1, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/01/t-magazine/sag-harbor.html.

located to American Beach's south) agreed to transfer administrative control over the famed sand dune known as "NaNa" to the National Park Service.[76]

As she underwent cancer treatment, Betsch continued to advocate for and work to preserve the town's history. She turned her mobile home into a veritable archive of papers, relics, and other treasures documenting the town's history, and made plans to create a museum. In September 2005, Betsch succumbed to cancer. In the years that followed, her efforts to preserve the historic Black community bore more fruits. That same year, the Trust for Public Land purchased the building that housed the Evans Rendezvous nightclub and made plans to restore the structure and turn it into a visitor center and museum.[77]

After decades of losing long-time residents, American Beach began to experience a steady influx of new African American seasonal residents who were attracted by the prospect of vacationing or living year-round in a Black community. Carol Alexander and Alfonso Washington were among those new residents. While on vacation in Florida, the Black couple from Philadelphia stumbled upon the seaside community. As Alexander described, "We were just driving around, and I said 'Al, there's black people here!'" The couple purchased a home and became active members of the community, with Alexander later becoming the president of the A. L. Lewis Historical Society. Today, along the town's main street, a large mural reads, "Protect your heritage. Don't sell out."[78]

[76] "Celebrations Planned for Life and Work of the Beach Lady," *Jacksonville Free Press*, October 13, 2005; Nijhuis, "Madame Butterfly"; "American Beach Is Nationally Acclaimed," *Jacksonville Free Press*, July 29, 1998; "Central Florida Is a Hot Spot for African American Culture," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 3, 1999; Alan Huffman, "An American Beach," *Preservation* 57, no. 4 (2005): 34–36. In 2001, the Hippard House, in American Beach, also known as Martha's Hideaway, was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The dune is administered by the National Park Service as part of the Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve. See Joel McEachin and Robert O. Jones, "Hippard House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001).

[77] "'Beach Lady' Faces Turmoil: Belongings Confiscated and Destroyed on Cusp of Cancer Surgery," *Jacksonville Free Press*, April 10, 2002; Nijhuis, "Madame Butterfly"; "Celebrations Planned for Life and Work of the Beach Lady," *Jacksonville Free Press*, October 13, 2005.

[78] "Residents Fighting for Preservation of Historically Black Resort on Florida Coast," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1992; "Professionals Strive to Preserve African-American Beach in North Florida," *Knight Ridder Tribune Business News*, August 2, 2002.

Conclusion

Closing the Nature Gap

In recent decades, the National Park Service has worked to make the National Park System more inclusive. This includes the creation of new NPS units that recognize African American history, the addition of new sites associated with African American outdoor recreation, and the creation of three networks dedicated to African American history: the Underground Railroad, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement.[79] The Civil Rights Grant Program has provided preservation funding to sites such as American Beach and supported the Maryland Lost Towns Project, Inc. which intends to do a survey and inventory of recreational and leisure areas for African Americans during the Civil Rights era in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.[80]

These efforts are urgently needed, as Black historical sites not only remain underrepresented, but also uniquely vulnerable. Founded as places of refuge and seclusion from a racist society that treated African Americans as second-class citizens, today the historically Black recreational sites that still exist in physical form struggle to survive in the face of relentless pressure from real estate speculators and developers and indifference (if not outright hostility) from local officials. Places that were once treated by whites as inferior and undesirable *because* they were owned and occupied by Black people are today often seen as highly desirable and coveted by investors and developers, most of whom are white. Just as Black people and Black history have suffered the costs of redevelopment in recreational settings popular among Americans today, the beneficiaries have been overwhelmingly white. But these losses have not gone uncontested. Indeed, the efforts of MaVynee Betsch at American Beach in the 1990s and those of numerous other community activists and preservationists today underscore the significance of historic preservation in ongoing struggles for Black freedom.

As the nation struggles to come to terms with the legacies of racial injustices in the past and racism in the present, recreational spaces and activities will continue to serve as a barometer of racial conditions in American society as a whole. Ensuring that Black Americans enjoy access to outdoor recreational space and feel safe in these spaces is critical to addressing broader racial inequities and social and environmental injustices in American society today. Studies show that

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[79] On the Underground Railroad, see https://www.nps.gov/subjects/undergroundrailroad/index.htm. On the Reconstruction Era, see https://www.nps.gov/reer/index.htm. On Civil Rights, see https://www.nps.gov/subjects/civilrights/index.htm.

[80] See Cindy Jackson, "National Park Service Awards Grant for Evan's Rendezvous Structure Report," *Fernandina Observer* [Florida], July 7, 2020, https://fernandinaobserver.com/county-news/national-park-service-awards-grant-for-evans-rendezvous-structure-report/; "How Can the National Park Services Work to Be Anti-Racist?," *Travel*, June 23, 2020, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/national-parks/article/more-diversity-how-to-make-national-parks-anti-racist; Rebecca Stanfield McCown et al., "Engaging New and Diverse Audiences in the National Parks: An Exploratory Study of Current Knowledge and Learning Needs," *George Wright Forum* 29, no. 2 (2012): 272–84; Kathryn Miles, "Shenandoah National Park Is Confronting Its History," *Outside*, September 23, 2019, https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/hiking-and-backpacking/shenandoah-national-park-segregation-history/; "Fact Sheet: On Every Kid In a Park Day of Action, White House Announces Commitments to Getting Nearly Half a Million Kids Outside," whitehouse.gov, April 21, 2016, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/21/fact-sheet-every-kid-park-day-action-white-house-announces-commitments; James Edward Mills, "Bringing Black History to Life in the Great Outdoors," *New York Times*, September 20, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/09/20/multimedia/black-national-park-rangers.html.

access to nature and green spaces has a pronounced impact on individuals' health and well-being, especially among children.[81] And in the United States today, African Americans disproportionately suffer from nature deprivation. Black people are less likely to live near parks, greenways, hiking trails, and other outdoor recreational and natural settings than white Americans. The most recent survey by the Trust for Public Land found that people of color are "least likely to live close to parks with basic amenities like bathrooms, playgrounds and basketball courts."[82] Even when African Americans live near nature and outdoor recreational settings, they report lower levels of use. This is due, in part, to Blacks' collective memories of racial violence and ongoing experience of discrimination and hostility in these settings.[83] It is also the product of public disinvestment in outdoor recreation, which dates back to the tax revolts of the late 1970s (as covered in chapter 5). Public funding for public recreation was further decimated in the years following the Great Recession of 2008, as local governments slashed funding for parks and recreation in order to close budget gaps.[84]

The result has been a widening of the nature gap. "In the United States today," the authors of a 2020 report by the Center for American Progress concluded, "the color of one's skin or the size of one's bank account is a solid predictor of whether one has safe access to nature and all of its benefits."[85] Those benefits include better physical and mental health. The nature deprivations that Black people suffer today are indelibly tied to the forms of systemic racism and violence Black people suffered in the past (which this study has chronicled) and the systemic racism and violence they continue to experience in the present. Addressing these inequities and closing the "nature gap" is not only a matter of urgent concern to communities of color, but to all of us. Just as the underlying forces causing global warming are the same ones widening racial inequalities in society, the making of a more environmentally sustainable and racially just future must also be indelibly linked. Understanding the history told in this context study constitutes a necessary first step.

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[81] Susan Strife and Liam Downey, "Childhood Development and Access to Nature: A New Direction for Environmental Inequality Research," *Organization & Environment* 22, no. 1 (2009): 99–122; Sivajanani Sivarajah, Sandy M. Smith, and Sean C. Thomas, "Tree Cover and Species Composition Effects on Academic Performance of Primary School Students," *PLOS ONE* 13, no. 2 (2018): e0193254, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0193254; Alejandra Borunda, "How 'Nature Deprived' Neighborhoods Impact the Health of People of Color," *National Geographic*, July 29, 2020, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/07/how-nature-deprived-neighborhoods-impact-health-people-of-color/.

[82] Nina Lakhani, "Millions of Americans Lack Access to Quality Parks, Report Reveals," *The Guardian*, May 20, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/20/park-inequality-access-coronavirus-wellbeing.

[83] Kangjae Jerry Lee and David Scott, "Bourdieu and African Americans' Park Visitation: The Case of Cedar Hill State Park in Texas," *Leisure Studies* 38, no. 5 (2016): 424–440; Brentin Mock, "For African Americans, Park Access Is About More Than Just Proximity," *City Lab*, June 2, 2016, https://www.citylab.com/design/2016/06/for-african-americans-park-access-is-about-more-than-just-proximity/485321/.

[84] Nicholas Pitas et al., "The Great Recession's Profound Impact on Parks and Recreation," *National Recreation and Park Association*, February 6, 2018, https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/february/the-great-recessions-profound-impact-on-parks-and-recreation/.

[85] Jenny Rowland-Shea et al., "The Nature Gap: Confronting Racial and Economic Disparities in the Destruction and Protection of Nature in America," Center for American Progress, July 21, 2000, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-nature-gap/.

Part B: National Historic Landmark Registration Guidelines

National Historic Landmarks designated under the *African American Outdoor Recreation NHL Theme Study* must be acknowledged to be among the nation's most significant properties associated with African American outdoor recreation in the period from emancipation to the early twenty-first century. The period is characterized by events such as the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision (1896); the Great Migration in the twentieth century; the establishment of state and national parks; the establishment of African American recreational and cultural spaces during Jim Crow; and the end of segregation with the passage of the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act. Nationally significant associations and a high level of historic integrity are the thresholds for National Historic Landmark designation. A property must have a direct and meaningful documented association with an event or individual and must be evaluated against comparable properties to identify the resources with the strongest association with the event or individual before its eligibility for landmark designation can be confirmed.

NHL Criteria for National Significance

National Historic Landmarks criteria are set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 36, Parks, Forests, and Public Property, part 65.4 [a & b], National Historic Landmark Criteria. The Criteria are used to describe how properties are nationally significant for their association with important events or persons. According to the criteria, the quality of national significance can be ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects, that:

- possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture; and
- possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and

    - Criterion 1: (Events) Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of US history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained; or

    - Criterion 2: (Persons) Are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States; or

    - Criterion 3: (Ideal) Represent some great idea or ideal of the American people; or

    - Criterion 4: (Physical Design / Architecture) Embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive, and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

    - Criterion 5: (Historic Districts) Are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to

warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture; or

- Criterion 6: (Archaeology, or information potential) This criterion is not discussed since archaeology is not a topic of this theme study.

Applying the NHL Criteria to African American Outdoor Recreation Properties

The following discussion provides general guidance for evaluating national significance for African American Outdoor Recreation Properties. A nomination must justify a property's associated NHL criteria, period of significance, and area(s) of significance.

NHL Criteria: Properties evaluated under the African American Outdoor Recreation theme study will be significant under NHL Criteria 1, 2, 3, and/or 5 as discussed further below. Because the African American Outdoor Recreation Theme Study's focuses on outdoor sites and experiences, specific registration guidance is not provided for properties that may be eligible under Criterion 4 for architecture.

Period of Significance: Properties evaluated under the African American Outdoor Recreation theme study will be significant between the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the impact of desegregation on African American outdoor recreation properties.

Area of Significance: Properties nominated for NHL designation must be justified under one or more areas of significance. These areas reflect a property's nationally significant contributions to the broader patterns of American history and culture. Several areas are prominently overlayed in the Theme Study chapters. Overall, properties associated with these events and individuals may be nationally significant under one or more of the following areas of significance: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History and Ethnic Heritage-Black, Performing Arts, Community Planning and Development, and Health and Medicine. These areas of significance are grouped in the criteria guidance below.

Criterion 1. Properties associated with events

Criterion 1 recognizes properties important for their historic association with either a specific event marking an important moment in American history, or with a pattern of events that made a significant contribution to the development of the United States. Mere association with historic events or trends is not enough to qualify under this criterion. The property must outstandingly represent its associated event, strongly and definitively convey and interpret its meaning, and must be considered of the highest importance. Below are the predominant areas of significance that emerged from the Theme Study and examples of related property types.

Entertainment/Recreation, Performing Arts

Properties under these areas of significance must outstandingly represent Black American culture and society in the creation of Black outdoor recreational spaces during Jim Crow and

Segregation and the development and practice of leisure activity. Examples of property types and how they may prove nationally significant under Criterion 1 include:

- A resort that exemplifies a place of production and dissemination of Black music and Black popular culture
- A resort community that is recognized as offering Blacks the "time and space for leisure on their own terms and among their own people"
- An ocean, lake, or river beach recognized in the forefront of places that offered pleasure and relief from the ever-present and overwhelming strictures of Jim Crow

Social History and Ethnic Heritage-Black

Properties under these areas of significance must outstandingly represent the broad national pattern of civil rights, social justice, and the life ways of Black Americans. Examples of property types and how they may prove nationally significant under Criterion 1 include:

- A resort or amusement park recognized as a place of production and dissemination of Black Music and popular culture
- A resort community that is recognized as offering Blacks the "time and space for leisure on their own terms and among their own people"
  A country club that is recognized as a place that brought pleasure and relief from the ever-present and overwhelming strictures of Jim Crow
- A resort whose very presence demonstrated an expressed rejection of Jim Crow by Black Americans.
- A public or private park associated with nearby African American Communities and neighborhoods that offered the community a place to gather and spend leisure time together in outdoor public space and served as Black social recreation spaces that were influential in shaping and sustaining Black civic engagement and social activism.

Community Planning and Development

Properties under these areas of significance must outstandingly demonstrate Black Americans' opportunity of home ownership for an expanding Black middle class and the realization of the American ideal of opportunity for all. Examples of property types and how they may prove nationally significant under Criterion 1 include:

- A resort community that is recognized as offering Blacks the opportunity of home ownership and the "time and space for leisure on their own terms and among their own people."
- A resort community that exceptionally demonstrates the emergence and growth of a Black elite and a Black middle class which fueled the growth of Black pleasure travel and vacationing in the mid-twentieth century

Health and Medicine

Properties under these areas of significance must outstandingly represent opportunities Black sought during the Great Migration Era to have equal opportunity to the healthy aspects of active

leisure available to White Americans. Examples of property types and how they may prove nationally significant under Criterion 1 include:

- A campground that outstandingly represents a place to commune with nature and, through active leisure in nature, improve the health and well-being of Black urban populations.
- A resort that represents the opportunity to commune with nature through active leisure and that offered pleasure and relief from the ever-present and overwhelming strictures of Jim Crow.

Criterion 2. Properties associated with individuals

Properties evaluated under Criterion 2 must be associated with individuals who played critical roles within the African American outdoor recreation context. As with Criterion 1, the areas of significance and nationally significant events relate to the development of recreational spaces that offered Blacks the time and space for leisure on their own terms and among their own people; the encounters, protests and conflicts that led to these developments; and the expression of their morals and values. These leisure and recreation places where Black people came together became critical properties, too, in the production and dissemination of Black popular culture. The individual must have made nationally significant contributions that can be specifically documented and that are directly associated with an African American outdoor recreation context and the property being considered. To determine a definitive role, it will be necessary to compare the individual's contributions with the contributions of others in the same field. The length of association is often an important factor when assessing several properties with similar historically important associations. It is imperative that a property reflect the person's productive life and have a significant association with the individual's activity.

A property may be considered under Criterion 2 for its association with a person associated with this topic who may include:

- A person influential in the founding and development of a Black-owned and operated outdoor recreation property or resort community.
- A performer or entertainer who is acknowledged as a premier exponent of a particular music or dance genre who developed or honed their craft at an African American Resort. A well-known person merely performing at an African American Resort or other outdoor recreation area would not rise to the level of national significance.

Criterion 3. Properties associated with ideals

Properties are likely to be eligible under NHL Criterion 3 only in those rare instances when they are strongly associated with ideas and ideals of the highest order in African American and American history. Several African American outdoor recreation property types embody the American ideal of "opportunity for all," and those equal opportunities for Black Americans that led to the emergence of a Black Elite and a Black middle class with leisure time that fueled the growth of Black pleasure travel and vacationing. This criterion has a very high threshold and is seldom used. Recreation properties that may be considered under Criterion 3 for their association with the ideal of opportunity for all include:

- Resort Communities that offered the opportunity for home ownership.

Criterion 4. Properties/districts associated with physical design

Criterion 4 recognizes properties significant for their physical design or construction, including such elements as architecture, landscape architecture, and engineering. Since the African American Outdoor Recreation Theme Study did not focus on designed architectural or landscape architectural qualities, specific registration guidance is not provided for properties that may be eligible under Criterion 4 for architecture, landscape architecture, or engineering.

Criterion 5. Historic Districts

Criterion 5 recognizes districts that collectively possess exceptional *historic* importance and which may also be considered under NHL Criterion 1. According to eligibility guidelines, criterion 5:

> …. covers groups of resources known as historic districts. Most of the individual resources within historic districts could not stand alone as National Historic Landmarks; however, collectively they are associated with a nationally significant event, movement, or broad pattern of national development.
>
> A majority of the historic districts that are recognized by this criterion are nationally significant for their extraordinary historic importance in illustrating or commemorating a way of life or culture. Criterion 5 is rarely used on its own; many of these historic districts also use Criterion 1.[1]

Recreation properties with features that collectively possess significance and that may be considered under Criterion 5 include:

- Resorts and resort communities comprised of an assemblage of natural and man-made features that outstandingly exemplify places to commune with nature through active leisure and exemplify the feeling of being in nature.
- Beaches, campgrounds, golf courses, and amusement parks that have contributing supporting buildings, structures, and other constructed features.

Criterion 6. Archaeology, or information potential

Criterion 6 recognizes properties that have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.

This criterion most often recognizes nationally significant archeological properties. Data produced at these sites have already produced and are likely to yield nationally significant

[1] "National Historic Landmarks: Eligibility," NPS.gov, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/eligibility.htm.

information. No nationally significant archeological properties were identified in the Theme Study.

National Historic Landmark Criterion Exceptions

Certain kinds of property are not usually considered for National Historic Landmark designation, including religious properties and sites of a building or structure no longer standing. Properties that fall into those categories require special consideration and generally have to meet higher standards in their other criteria for designation in order to be designated National Historic Landmarks. Recreation properties not usually eligible for designation may be found to qualify if they fall within the following categories:

Exception 1. A recreation property owned by a religious institution that derives its primary national significance from offering Blacks a place to commune with nature on their own terms and among their own people and relief from the ever-present and overwhelming strictures of Jim Crow.

Exception 2. A building or structure associated with African American outdoor recreation that has been moved from their original historic location, but still remain in the same setting. This might specifically apply to resources that have been relocated within an historic district, especially if they have been removed to prevent demolition or other destruction.

Exception 3. A site of a building or structure no longer standing but the events associated with its removal and its physical absence demonstrate the struggle of Black Americans to achieve relief from the ever-present and overwhelming strictures of Jim Crow.

Exception 6. Reconstructed buildings or grouping of buildings associated with African American recreation, but such properties are only eligible if the reconstruction is accurate and is part of a restoration master plan, when no other buildings with the same association are extant.

Integrity

Properties considered for National Historic Landmark designation must meet at least one of the National Historic Landmark criteria identified above and retain a high degree of integrity. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historical associations or attributes. The evaluation of integrity is somewhat of a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its historical associations or attributes. The National Historic Landmark Program requires that these places retain a high level of integrity. The NHL Program recognizes the same seven aspects or qualities of integrity as the National Register. These are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

- *Location* is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons.
- *Design* is the combination of elements that create the historic form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. This includes such elements as organization of space, proportion,

scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. Design can also apply to districts and to the historic way in which the buildings, sites, or structures are related including spatial relationships between major features; visual rhythms in a streetscape or landscape plantings; the layout and materials of walkways and roads; and the relationship of other features. In instances where the original use or program of major features has changed, the significance of the property and whether it can still convey the event with which it is associated should be taken into account.

- *Setting* is the physical environment of a historic property. It refers to the historic character of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves how, not just where, the property is situated and its historical relationship to surrounding features and open space. The physical features that constitute the historic setting of a historic property can be either natural or manmade and include such elements as topographic features, water features, vegetation, woodlands, open space patterns, period roads and street layout, paths, fences, and the relationships between buildings and other features or open spaces.
- *Materials* are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. If the property has been rehabilitated, the historic materials and significant features must have been preserved. The property must also be an actual historic resource, not a re-creation; a property whose historic features have been lost and then reconstructed is usually not eligible.
- *Workmanship* is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object, or site. It may be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing.
- *Feeling* is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. For African American Recreation properties, integrity of feeling may be associated with retaining the "sense of place" conveyed by the original design, materials, workmanship, and setting
- *Association* is the direct link between an important historic event, pattern of events, or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. For African American Outdoor recreation sites this could include places to experience nature or that convey the creation by Blacks of safe, decent, and accessible recreation places of their own during Jim Crow.

To assess integrity, one must

1. define the essential physical features that must be present to a high degree for a property to represent its significance;

2. determine whether the essential physical features are apparent enough to convey the property's significance; and
3. compare the property with similar properties in the nationally significant theme.

A property that is significant for its historical association should retain the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with the important event, historical pattern, or person(s).

Comparison Evaluation

Each property being considered for National Historic Landmark designation must be evaluated against other comparable properties associated with the same event to establish the relative merit of the significance and integrity of the property and to provide the basis for determining which sites have an association of exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the history of African American outdoor recreation.

African American Outdoor Recreation Sites Regional Contexts

At the time of this study, over 380 sites associated with Segregation Era African American recreation have been identified nationwide. The amount of available information for each identified site is widely varied. In some cases, only a site name is known. Some site names may, however, offer clues to the recreation activities or the character of a site. Extensive information is available for those sites that have been designated as National Historic Landmarks, added to the National Register of Historic Places and the Historic American Landscapes Survey, or recognized at the state and local level, providing an understanding of those sites' histories, evolution, patrons, and featured recreation activities. More detailed information is also available for those sites that have been the subject of studies by independent scholars and authors. Currently, however, for the majority of the identified sites, only partial information is available.

Analysis of the available site information, when aggregated, has provided important understanding. Most importantly, the analysis has identified over thirty recreation property types nationwide where the recreation activity is outdoors and the experience of nature was an aspect of the recreational experience. While there are overlaps and nuanced distinctions among the recreation property types identified, all of the recreation property types fit within seven primary, overarching typologies: Amusement Park, Beach, Campground, Country Club, Local Park/Swimming Pool, Resort, and State Park. The complete glossary list of recreation property typologies and types is included in the Appendix.

The Analysis has also provided an understanding of African American outdoor recreation within the spatial contexts of Segregation Era strictures and events. The nationwide and regional distribution of recreation properties offers a window into the impact of the implementation of Jim Crow laws and practices, the codification of segregation's doctrine of "separate but equal" public facilities, and the impacts of the Great Migration including the experience of nature as an anodyne to the increasingly crowded urban conditions experienced by African Americans in the industrial north, and the subsequent rise of an African American middle class with increased opportunities for leisure and mobility. Analysis of the regional distribution and concentrations of outdoor recreation property types across the country demonstrates the direct connection between recreation, regional natural resources and the ever-present spatial legacies of the Segregation Era.

In the Northeast Region, which includes Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine, the most numerous recreation site typologies were beaches and resorts. Most of the region's beaches were ocean beaches reflecting the proximity of many northeastern cities to the ocean and Chesapeake Bay. While there were coastal resorts in the region, most of the region's identified resorts were inland mountain and lake resorts offering urban African Americans recreation experiences in the more rural natural, scenic landscapes of the region. It is significant that African American Parks, including state parks, are noted only in Virginia and Maryland, the two southern-most states in the region. African American Parks there are evidence of "separate but equal" public recreation facilities for African American's.

In the Southeast Region, which includes Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Kentucky, over fifty state and local city parks evidence the South's implementation of the "separate but equal" doctrine in the first half of the

twentieth century for African American public recreation properties. With only two non-coastal states in the Southeast region, beaches, including beach resorts, were the second most numerous recreation property type in the region. Florida, the state with the longest coastline, was the state with the most beaches. No properties are thus far known in the region's territories: U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

In the Midwest Region, which includes North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio, resorts, particularly lake resorts were the most numerous recreation property type. Of particular note were the lake resort communities established in the northern tier of the region. Idlewild, a lake resort community in Lake County, Michigan established in the second decade of the twentieth century on reclaimed timberland, would become known nationwide as a premier African American resort offering a full range of outdoor recreation opportunities including swimming, boating, fishing, and horseback riding. Hunting was an outdoor recreational activity that brought outdoorsmen to Idlewild each fall. The prevalence of resorts in the northern tier of states in the region took advantage of the regions many lakes and large areas of timberland. Outdoor recreation in the region offered a respite from the increasingly crowded urban conditions and the work in varied industries across the region that brought African Americans north during the Great Migration. In the region's southern-most states, Arkansas and Missouri, the springs and mountain scenery of the Ozark mountains and segregated state parks offered African Americans different outdoor recreation opportunities.

Farther west in the Intermountain Region the number and variety of African American outdoor recreation properties were less numerous than in the regions east of the Mississippi River reflecting the region's distance from the country's major African American population centers. African Americans took advantage of the recreation opportunities offered in the western national parks but in the intermountain region to date no African American outdoor recreation properties have been documented in the states of Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico. A handful of nationally recognized resorts and camps developed in Colorado, in response to the state's dramatic mountain landscapes, spectacular scenery, and bountiful hunting and fishing. Segregated local city and state parks could be found in Arizona and Oklahoma but the largest number of recreation properties were established in Texas which had more African American recreation properties than the region's other seven states combined. However, the variety of outdoor recreation experiences offered the state's African American citizens was limited. Only one state park was developed in Texas and a single African American beach has been thus far documented on the state's Gulf Coast. Local, urban parks were the state's most numerous African American recreation properties, likely evidence of the implementation of the segregationist doctrine of separate but equal facilities.

In the Pacific West Region, the number of documented African American outdoor recreation sites also remains limited. Research thus far has documented African American recreation properties in only two states in the region, California and Washington. A lake resort near Spokane established in the first decade of the twentieth century as a resort for Blacks in the city is the only recreation site documented in Washington state. Ten sites including ocean beaches, lake resorts, and dude ranches are known in California, all within close proximity to Los Angeles. No properties are thus far known in the region's other states and territories including Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Hawaii, Alaska, American Samoa, and Guam.

Methodology

Creating the Context

The National Park Service partnered with Andrew Kahrl, an historian of African American leisure and recreation, to prepare the theme study's historic context. The National Park Service wanted to examine how race structured African Americans' access to outdoor recreation and leisure resources from the end of the Civil War through the present and to provide a national synthesis of the topic. Working with a team of doctoral students in the University of Virginia's history PhD program, Kahrl employed primary and secondary sources in creating an expansive context history that spans multiple historic periods and addresses key themes in the history of African American outdoor recreation and situates African Americans' outdoor experiences in relation to broader themes in African American history. Due to the challenges of conducting research during a pandemic, the researchers relied heavily on digital archival collections and digitally reproduced printed materials as primary sources. During the first year of research on the project, Kahrl received research assistance from history PhD student Allison Mitchell, who applied her training and expertise in civil rights and legal history and the history of the modern U.S. South to conduct research on the fight to desegregate recreational facilities during the civil rights era and to survey the broad range of scholarship on African American outdoor recreation found in the Works Cited section. During the project's second year, Kahrl worked with history PhD student Malcolm Cammeron on the drafting of chapters for the historic context. Building on and extending the research conducted by Mitchell, Cammeron assumed primary responsibility for drafting the first two chapters of the historic context, and identifying and summarizing the current status of properties mentioned throughout the study. For his contributions to the writing of the historic context, Cammeron is listed as its co-author. In the final year of research, history PhD student Gramond McPherson was in charge of the process of locating and securing permission rights to the images included in the historic context and in organizing the comprehensive list of properties included in Appendix A.

All three graduate student researchers contributed to the digital project that accompanies the publication of this report. This project, titled "African Americans and the Great Outdoors" (https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/african-americans-and-the-great-outdoors.htm), is designed to provide students with a dynamic visual resource that shows how African Americans navigated outdoor spaces through the late nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries.

Identifying the National Historic Landmark Evaluation List

The guidelines in this study assess 35 properties identified by the authors of the Theme Study for inclusion on the NHL evaluation list. Five sites were identified early by the Theme Study team as high potential NHLs and 30 properties were identified as potential NHLs. Each chapter of the Theme Study and the Theme Study team's research notes for each property identified for inclusion on the NHL evaluation list were reviewed to assist in determining national significance and integrity thresholds for formulating guidelines. Further assessment through online sources provided additional information to assist in determining national significance and integrity thresholds and to confirm that seven potential properties were either no longer extant or were lacking in integrity and should be removed from further study.

Review Process

The second draft of the Theme Study was sent out for an agency-wide review by the National Park Service. Over 100 comments were received, primarily from agency historians in the Regional and Washington offices. In addition, the Organization of American Historians (OAH) coordinated five external peer reviews. One review was provided by Dr. Victoria Wolcott, and four were double-blind reviews by experts in the fields of African American History and Historic Preservation.

Responses to internal and external comments were incorporated in the final Theme Study.

Part C: Survey Results

Property Inventory and Assessment

This section lists existing African American outdoor recreation properties identified as nationally significant within the history, evolution and fabric of African American outdoor recreation, and preliminarily assesses properties identified for inclusion on the NHL evaluation list. These properties are divided into three category lists: 1) Properties Recognized as Nationally Significant, 2) National Historic Landmarks Study List, and 3) Properties Removed from Further Study.

1. Properties Recognized as Nationally Significant in the history of African American outdoor recreation are those properties designated or in the process of being designated as National Historic Landmarks.
2. The National Historic Landmarks Study List identifies properties that have strong associations with nationally significant patterns of events, themes, and individuals within the context of African American Outdoor Recreation during Jim Crow and Segregation. Thus, this study recommends that these properties be evaluated to determine their relative significance and integrity for NHL consideration. Each entry in this list indicates, to the extent known when identified, the integrity of the property, particularly its setting and feeling because of the fragile nature of the properties evaluated, particularly the complexes of resorts, beaches, and campgrounds. Such properties have been threatened by development, neglect or demolition since their period of national significance. None that are identified in the NHL Study List contain the extent of contributing buildings, structures, sites or objects present during their national period of significance. Therefore, considering the integrity aspects of setting and feeling are of particular importance in the evaluation process. The properties must continue to remain in a natural setting or retain the relationship to the natural landscape that was a basic requirement for the properties' outdoor recreational development, such that the feeling of outdoor recreation remains strong. Further evaluation may reveal-that a property either did not have or has since lost the high degree of integrity required for NHL consideration. Some properties on this list may also possess architectural significance. That aspect is not evaluated here since the Theme Study only addresses historical importance.
3. Properties Removed from Further Study are those properties not recommended for NHL consideration under this theme study. These entries describe places that either no longer exist, lack a high degree of integrity, or appear to not meet NHL criteria. Some properties may otherwise be eligible for listing in the National Register. The reason a property is not recommended for further study appears in italics at the end of its listing.

Recreation Property Types

The properties on each category list are organized by seven primary African American recreation landscape typologies found nation-wide and identified in the Theme Study: amusement park, beach, campground, country club, local park/swimming pool, resort, and state park.

Amusement Park

The layout of amusement parks varied but typically an amusement park offered a variety of amusements organized along a midway that served as a central public promenade. Supporting buildings and structures included open-air dance and music pavilions, merry-go-rounds, Ferris Wheels, thrill rides, bowling alleys, shooting galleries, dance and music pavilions, concession stands, and restaurants. The larger landscape of many amusement parks could include pony rides, miniature golf, a picnic ground with open lawns, shaded groves of trees, playgrounds, and beaches.

Beach

Sand beaches on the ocean shore, bays, lakes, and rivers offered daily seasonal recreation experiences including sunbathing, beachcombing, swimming, boating, fishing, crabbing, and birdwatching. Recreational amusements also included music performances and evening dances. Supporting buildings and structures included bath houses, concessions, restaurants, outdoor pavilions, piers, and a variety of lodgings including tents, cottages, hotels and motels. The larger beach landscape could include shaded picnic grounds, hiking trails, and varied amusements. At ocean beaches, the complex natural systems in the tidal zone, salt marshes, coastal landforms including bluffs and beach dunes, dune vegetation, and coastal maritime forests that support a great diversity of plants and wildlife, are natural landscape features of note.

Campground

Campground is an all-inclusive term for a variety of recreation settings, those varied camps and camping-grounds, primarily in rural settings, for individual and organized group activities, typically in the summer season. Campgrounds offered an escape from the city and an immersive experience in natural settings. Recreational activities at the camps included fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, swimming, boating, hiking, recreational sport and games and crafts. Landscape features at the camps included lakes, ponds, beaches, woodlands, trails, baseball fields, basketball and tennis courts, shaded picnic grounds, programmed open spaces for social gatherings; and supporting buildings and structures including lodges, pavilions, recreation and dining halls, cottages, cabins, huts, tents, and service infrastructure.

Country Club

The premises and grounds of a club, often with a restricted membership, with facilities for recreation and social interaction. Country Clubs can include facilities for a variety of sports but are most often associated with golf and golf courses. Golf courses have both natural and man-made features including turf fairways, turf tees, contoured turf greens, turf practice greens, roughs, sand bunkers, vegetated areas, wooded areas, wetlands, and water features, which serve as hazards along the course. Typical support facilities include a clubhouse, outdoor spaces for gathering socially, cart paths, concessions, restaurants, maintenance and storage buildings, parking areas, and additional sport facilities including tennis courts, ballfields, and swimming pools.

Local Park / Swimming Pool

A local park is an area of land, typically a green space, in a city or town associated with a nearby neighborhood or community that is set aside for outdoor recreational activities for the enjoyment and benefit of the community. In their local park, community members can play, exercise, enjoy themselves, and gather to participate in community life. A local park's buildings, structures, objects, and landscape features may support both active and passive recreational activities including recreational swimming. Those landscape features can include, gardens, open lawn areas, allées, shaded picnic grounds, woodlands, athletic fields, concession stands, water features, promenades, pedestrian paths, trails, park roads, fences walls, pavilions, arbors, benches, playgrounds, sand boxes, water fountains, and rest rooms. Buildings, structures, and landscape features associated with recreational swimming can include bath houses for men and women, splash pools for young children, a paved pool deck and turf areas for sunbathing along with concession stands, security fencing, and parking.

Resort

A resort is a place much frequented or visited for pleasure, relaxation, therapeutic value, a specific experience, or a recreational or seasonal activity. Featured activities can include recreational sports, swimming, boating, hunting, fishing, hiking, and the emersion in and experience of nature. Resorts can include man-made features such as street grids, sport facilities, amusement and entertainment venues and/or natural features such as beaches, lakes, rivers, springs, waterfalls, woodlands, forests, fall leaf color displays, mountains, prairies, wilderness, deserts, caverns and geological formations, and scenic vistas and overlooks that define the resort experience. Home ownership opportunities are a signature aspect of resort communities.

State Park

State Parks nation-wide were developed to provide scenic and recreational opportunities "within easy access of all the citizens of every state and territory" and to provide the purported therapeutic value of "health-giving playgrounds for each and every man, woman, and child," The early ideal for state parks focused on those special landscapes with existing natural features and high value scenic quality. Over time, however, those ideals were challenged by a growing emphasis on access and expanded recreational attractions. As William E. O'Brien has identified, by the 1950s the conflict over equal access to state parks had become a frontline for America's Civil Rights movement.[1] Among the attractions at state parks were beaches, lakes, including constructed lakes, ponds, caverns, scenic vistas and overlooks, and recreational facilities, including picnic grounds, campgrounds, playgrounds, tennis courts, baseball fields, horseshoe pits, and golf courses. Supporting buildings, structures, and landscape features included entrance signs, visitor centers or contact stations, piers, bath houses, rest rooms, picnic shelters, concession stands, restaurants, lodges, cabins, campgrounds, parking areas, and those roads and trails that provided access to the parks' scenery.

[1] See William E. O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South* (Amhurst: University of Massachusetts Press in Association with Library of American Landscape History Amhurst, 2016).

More detailed, property type sub-categories within each of the seven primary typologies are included in Appendix B: Glossary of Landscape Typologies identified in the Theme Study.

The listing for each property in the three category lists includes the property name and location in **bold.** The property's detailed landscape typology sub-category, the related NHL criteria, and the period of significance, are also all shown in **bold.** A property description is provided which also notes the property's significance and integrity. This is not an exhaustive list of properties that may be considered for designation under this study. Some properties may also be considered for designation under the Civil Rights in America Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations and Recreation in the United States National Historic Landmark Theme Studies.

Properties Recognized as Nationally Significant

Campgrounds

Lewis Mountain Campground (added to the Skyline Drive National Historic Landmark District in 2008)
Campground
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1939–1964
The creation of the Lewis Mountain Negro Area Campground is an example of those segregated spaces created within National Parks where Southern Blacks could enjoy themselves and have access to camping and recreation and the natural scenic beauty of their states' landscape experience that had been denied them in the Jim Crow era. Lewis Mountain Campground in Shenandoah National Park embodied many of the inequities that characterized Jim Crow "separate but equal" recreation facilities throughout the American South. Built by the CCC, the campground was completed in 1939 and quickly attracted church groups and social clubs from Washington, DC, and Black vacationers from throughout the East Coast. The campground featured 40 picnic tables, 12 fireplaces, restrooms and 30 tent and trailer spaces. In its first year of operation the campground attracted 9,300 visitors. The entire facility was managed and run by an all-Black staff. The popular campground soon added rental cabins and a dining lodge where bands played on weekends and where many park visitors, including whites, thought the best food in the park was served. Lewis Mountain was integrated in 1951, well before the end of segregation in the 1960s. The campground landscape setting and feeling retains a high degree of integrity. The Skyline Drive Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 (NRIS #97000375). The Lewis Mountain Campground was added to the Skyline Drive Historic District by a 2003 Boundary Expansion (NRIS #03001251). In 2008, the district was designated a National Historic Landmark.[2]

[2] For additional information on Lewis Mountain Campground, see Reed Engle, "Laboratory for Change," *Resource Management Newsletter*, January 1996, reprinted in Segregation and Desegregation at Shenandoah National Park, National Park Service (Oct. 12, 2018), accessed December 8, 2020, https://www.nps.gov/articles/segregation-and-desegregation-at-shenandoah.htm [https://perma.cc/AB3A-FPRX]; Larry Bleiberg, "The Segregated Campground that was a Refuge for Black Travelers," Atlas Obscura, October 19, 2020, https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/shenandoah-segregated-campground; Carol Hooper, "Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1997), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77835488; Judith Robinson et al., "Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2003), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77835137; Linda Flint McClelland and Reed L. Engle, "Skyline Drive Historic District," National Historic Landmark Nomination (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2008).

Resorts

Wink's Panorama (Wink's Lodge), Rollinsville, Gilpin County, Colorado (NRHP 1980, NRHP Boundary Expansion 2014). A National Historic Landmark Nomination has been completed for Wink's Panorama and is under consideration for designation.
Mountain Resort
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1928–1965
Wink's Panorama is an example of a rare Rocky Mountain destination for a national clientele of Black travelers seeking a mountain recreational experience during the era of segregation. The resort lodge, built by Obrey Wendall "Winks" Hamlet, opened 1928. The lodge was located in the African American mountain resort community of Lincoln Hills, twenty-eight miles northwest of Denver. Many of Wink's patrons came from the Denver area, but vacationers also came to Wink's from across the country, arriving by automobile or train. Wink's Panorama offered its patrons a safe space free from discrimination to pursue outdoor mountain activities, including hiking, horseback riding, sightseeing, and trout fishing in nearby South Boulder Creek. At Wink's, vacationers could enjoy views of the Rocky Mountains, fresh air, cool breezes, an intimate experience of nature, and deliciously prepared food. The nature experience offered at Wink's, with its "perpetual sunshine," "fragrant wild flowers" and "health giving pine forests," was featured in the lodge's marketing brochures. The lodge was carefully sited among the existing vegetation and slope conditions, and Wink's sensitive use of materials and structural techniques supported the lodge's harmony with its environment. Today, Wink's Panorama retains the feeling of an early-to-mid-twentieth century Rocky Mountain lodge with a supporting ensemble of outbuildings and landscape features. The lodge closed in 1965, with the death of Obrey "Wink" Hamlet and the property's role as a Black destination resort ended. Wink's Lodge retains an "excellent integrity of setting." The evergreens in the surrounding forest have grown taller and period landscape elements such as the terraces, picnic area, and small-scale features remain. There have been no new construction or removals to the grounds. Wink's Lodge was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 (NRIS #80000901) at a state level of significance. A revised nomination for an expanded boundary was approved in 2014 (NRIS #13001035). The revised nomination identified a national and local level of significance. Wink's Panorama has a high potential as a National Historic Landmark and a National Historic Landmark Nomination is currently under review for Wink's Panorama. That nomination has been well received by the National Park Service Advisory Board's National Historic Landmarks Committee.[3]

[3] For additional information on Wink's Panorama, see Bertha W. Calloway, Everett and LaBarbara Wigfall Fly, "Winks Panorama," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1980), https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/b7814e00-3c94-4353-a0c7-cd17af3005c1; Craig Leavitt, revised by Astrid Liverman, "Winks Panorama (Boundary Increase)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2014), https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/ba4afee3-a6df-4da6-ba53-8c10c18132f5; Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons, "Winks Panorama (Revised Draft)," National Historic Landmark Nomination, March 8, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/upload/2021-Fall-Winks-Panorama-NHL-NOM-FINAL-508.pdf.

National Historic Landmarks Study List

Amusement Parks

Paradise Park, Silver Springs, Florida
Amusement Park
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1949–1964
Charter buses brought Black vacationers to the amusements at Paradise Park from as far away as California and New York. From 1949 to 1969, Paradise Park, located on the Silver River in Silver Springs Florida, provided a place to vacation and to escape the harsh indignities of segregation. The resort was developed by Carl Ray and W.M. "Shorty" Davidson, co-owners of the nearby white resort, Silver Springs. Paradise Park boasted a swimming area with a sandy beach, tropical landscaping, a reptile exhibit, and a pavilion with a dance floor and jukebox. Visitors to Paradise Park could play sports including softball, go swimming and, like the white patrons at nearby Silver Springs, enjoy glass-bottom tours along the Silver River. Silver Springs was extensively promoted and the park attracted groups and visitors from across the country. Local churches continued to host picnics and conduct baptisms at Paradise Park. The park's patronage declined after the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. In 1967, the nearby white resort, Silver Springs, began admitting Black patrons and in 1969 Paradise Park was closed and its buildings razed. Surviving segregated amusement park sites from the Jim Crow era are today a particularly rare property type. Typically, amusement parks lost their integrity when the man-made amusements were removed, and the sites' midway organization was lost. At Paradise Park, the Silver River served as the park's "midway" and its crystal-clear waters a featured amusement as evidenced by the popularity of the park's glass-bottom boat cruises. Further study will be needed to confirm the integrity of Paradise Park's landscape setting on the Silver River, the period of significance, spatial organization and feeling, and whether any period features are extant that demonstrate the potential for a historic district nomination.[4]

Beaches

Atlantic Beach, Horry County, South Carolina
Ocean Beach Resort
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1934–1964
Atlantic Beach is an early example of an Atlantic coast ocean beach resort that evolved from a successful social recreation venue, a night club, into an African American vacation destination. The evolution of Atlantic Beach as an African American ocean-side site for recreation and leisure began in 1934 when African American businessman George W. Tyson opened the Black Hawk Night Club on 47 acres of newly purchased oceanfront property north of Myrtle Beach. In 1936, Tyson, spurred by the club's success, began developing and selling beachfront lots and purchasing additional acreage for the development of Atlantic Beach. For the next two decades,

[4] For additional information on Paradise Park, see "Brochure for Paradise Park, a segregated African-American tourist attraction," Florida Memory, State Library and Archives of Florida, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.floridamemory.com/learn/classroom/primary-source-sets/water/documents/paradisepark/; "Paradise Park," Florida Memory, State Library and Archives of Florida, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/273952.

Atlantic Beach, known as the "Black Pearl," thrived as a popular destination for African American vacationers. The town's heyday as an African American vacation resort ended in 1954 when Hurricane Hazel destroyed much of the town's infrastructure. Revitalization efforts slowed with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the end of the segregation era, when many African American vacationers sought new spaces of recreation in formerly white-only beaches and resorts. Since 1980, the Atlantic Beach Bike Fest and Black Bike Week, held each Labor Day weekend, has brought thousands of visitors to Atlantic Beach and as well as contested attempts, beginning in the 1990s, by white-owned businesses in Myrtle Beach to restrict and later ban this popular annual gathering. Further study will be needed to determine the integrity of the overall setting given the significant damage from Hurricane Hazel and the deterioration of the community's built environment from the 1970s through the 1990s.[5]

Bruce's Beach, Manhattan Beach, California
Ocean Beach
Criterion 1: <u>Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black</u>
Exception 3
Period of Significance: 1912–1924
Bruce's Beach represents a rare early example of African American entrepreneurs gaining access to an ocean beach property for development from progressive white landowners. Today, Bruce's Beach also stands as a powerful witness site to the subsequent harassment, intimidation, and legal actions that led to its closing and eventual demolition by the city of Manhattan Beach.

In 1912, Charles and Willa Bruce purchased two adjacent seaside lots in Manhattan Beach California along a two-block beachfront area set aside for minorities by white, progressive Manhattan beach landowner George Peck. The Bruces were the first African Americans to buy beach-front land from Peck and the couple had plans to establish a beach resort on their property. In 1915 construction of a beach lodge was begun and the Bruces rented swimsuits and sold food and drink to eager bathers. George Peck helped the Bruces construct a fishing pier on the property, and the resort was completed in 1920, when the Bruces bought an adjacent lot with an existing building that they converted to a venue for dining and dancing and added a lodge, café, and dressing-tents. Bruce's Beach quickly became a popular destination for Black Angelinos and the beachfront development soon attracted other African American families to the area. By 1920, several African American families had moved into the neighborhood. From its inception, however, the Bruces beachfront development had also attracted harassment and intimidation from local whites and the Ku Klux Klan, who vandalized beachgoers' cars and burned crosses on the beach. The city colluded to undermine the Bruce's beach-front resort by enacting a series of ordinances all designed to force the Bruces out of business. After years of harassment, in 1924 Manhattan Beach City Council condemned and seized the Bruces' property through eminent domain on the pretext of developing a public park. The resort's structures were torn down in 1927. In 1948 the vacant site of Bruce's Beach was transferred to the state of California. A public park was finally built on the site in the 1960s. In 1995, the site was transferred to Los

[5] For additional information on Atlantic Beach, see Jamesha Gibson, "Atlantic Beach: Historic African American Enclave in South Carolina," National Trust for Historic Preservation, March 12, 2015, https://savingplaces.org/stories/atlantic-beach-historic-african-american-enclave-in-south-carolina; Ronald J. Stephens, "Atlantic Beach, South Carolina (1966–)," Blackpast.org, April 14, 2021, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/atlantic-beach-south-carolina-1966/.

Angeles County in part to support beach operations and today Bruce's Beach Park includes the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Lifeguard Training Center.

Acknowledgment of the site's history and the indignities suffered by the Bruces led to the park being renamed Bruce's Beach Park in 2007. In 2021, 97 years after the land was taken from the Bruce's, the Manhattan Beach City Council formerly condemned the actions of their predecessors who orchestrated the efforts to remove the Bruces from their land. Legislation to transfer the Bruce's Beach property back to the descendants of Willa and Charles Bruce was passed unanimously by state lawmakers in September 2021. That same month the law allowing the property transfer was signed by Governor Gavin Newsom during a ceremony on the property. In his remarks before signing the law, Governor Newsom formally apologized for how the land was taken from the Bruces.

Today the open space of Bruce's Beach Park stands in stark contrast to the adjacent luxury homes that line what became one of California's signature beaches. Further study should be undertaken to document the powerful historical narrative of Bruce's Beach and explore the significance of the physical absence of the Beach's long-removed structures. A potential National Historic Landmark nomination under Criterion 1, Exception 3 should develop a strong documentation that demonstrates the national significance of this site in the struggles of Black Americans to achieve relief from the ever-present and overwhelming strictures of Jim Crow.[6]

Chicken Bone Beach, Atlantic City, New Jersey
Ocean Beach
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: c.1900–1964

Chicken Bone Beach represents a landscape that exemplifies the nationally significant restrictions imposed by segregation. Located on the long stretch of beach just south of downtown Atlantic City, New Jersey, Chicken Bone Beach was designated as the exclusively African American section of beach around 1900. Prior to 1900, African Americans could use the beaches of Atlantic City without restriction. Chicken Bone Beach's designation as a segregated beach appeased the city's growing number of hotel guests from the Jim Crow South. The Beach's name was a reference to the fried chicken many families brought to the beach as picnic food after many city restaurants refused to serve African American beachgoers. It remained a Black's-only beach until the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. During the segregation era, the beach provided ocean beach recreation and, later, served as a stellar improvisational entertainment stage attended by both African American tourists and local residents. Black entertainers who performed at Atlantic City's various entertainment venues and Black professionals who vacationed in Atlantic City all had cabañas along Chicken Bone Beach. Among the nationally

[6] For additional information on Bruce's Beach, see Tara Dublin, "Bruce's Beach Now Rightfully Belongs to the Black Family Whose Ancestors originally owned the Land," Hillreporter.com, September 29, 2021, https://hillreporter.com/bruces-beach-now-rightfully-belongs-to-the-black-family-whose-ancestors-originally-owned-the-land-114047; Betti Halsell, "Stolen Bruce's Beach Property Returned to Black Family," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, October 1, 2021, https://lasentinel.net/bruces-beach-property-returned-to-family.html; Ronald J. Stephens, Bruce's Beach, Manhattan Beach, California (1920-), Blackpast.org, February 18, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/bruce-s-beach-manhattan-beach-california-1920/; "Bruce's Beach to be returned to Black family 100 years after city used the law to steal it," *The Guardian*, October 1, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/01/bruces-beach-returned-100-years-california.

known African Americans who visited Chicken Bone Beach while performing in Atlantic City were Sammy Davis Jr., the Mills Brothers, Louis Jordan, Moms Mabley, and Sugar Ray Robinson. Further study will be needed to confirm that the beach setting and feeling retain a high degree of integrity as part of the city's ocean front.[7]

Chowan Beach, Hertford County, North Carolina
River Beach
Criteria 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1926–1964
Founded by Eli Reid, a trustee of the First Baptist Church of Winton, North Carolina in 1926, Chowan Beach was developed on an abandoned fishing beach on the Chowan River near Albemarle Sound. Reid, a World War I veteran, used his military and church connections to draw his first customers to the 400-acre site with natural springs, shade trees, and the sandy beaches that were its main attraction throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The addition of guest cottages with electricity and plumbing, bath houses, and the conversion of a former herring processing plan into a dance hall in the 1940s began the transformation of Chowan Beach from a recreational gathering place to a vacation destination for middle-class African Americans. Additional amenities at the growing resort included a restaurant, a dormitory for groups, and beachfront amusements, including a German-made carousel. In the late 1940s and 1950s Chowan Beach became a regular stop on the Chitlin Circuit, those Black-owned leisure venues and resorts that featured the era's most renown Black jazz and R&B performers who, through their touring, facilitated the cross-pollination of Black musical styles and sounds. Chowan Beach's heyday ended with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the end of the Segregation Era. Competition from a new generation of amusement parks led to the closure of Chowan Beach and sale of the property in 2004. Further study will be needed to determine the integrity of Chowan Beach's overall landscape setting and feeling.[8]

Virginia Key Beach, Virginia Key, Miami, Florida, (NRHP, 2002)
Ocean Beach and Local Park
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1945–1964
Located 2 miles southeast of downtown Miami, Virginia Key Beach opened in August 1945, the only beach in Dade County open to African Americans. Virginia Key Beach serves as an example of the determination of African Americans to secure from cities public places of recreation for their own use. The beach's designation for the "exclusive use of Negroes" was the result of community demands for equal ocean access and a response to wade-in protests at popular white beaches. Although accessible only by boat or ferry and subject to powerful rip tides, Virginia Key Beach quickly became a popular getaway and social gathering place for African Americans. In 1947, a causeway was built connecting Virginia Key to the mainland and in 1948 over 10,000 people attended a sunrise Easter service at the beach. In the early 1950s a

[7] For additional information on Chicken Bone Beach, see Ronald J. Stephens, "Chicken Bone Beach, Atlantic City, New Jersey, (1900–)," Blackpast.org, February 12, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/chicken-bone-beach-atlantic-city-new-jersey-1900/.
[8] For additional information on Chowan Beach, see Ronald J. Stephens, "Chowan Beach, Hertford County, North Carolina (1926-2004)," Blackpast.org, March 9, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/chowan-beach-hertford-county-north-carolina-1926-2004/.

hurricane destroyed many of the structures at Virginia Key Beach and plans were developed to provide Virginia Key Beach with facilities identical to those at nearby white-only Crandon Park. The beach's new amenities included an expanded parking lot, boat launch, rental cabins, changing cabanas, concession building, a carousel, a miniature train ride that encircled a lake as well as shaded picnic areas with barbeque pits. In 1982, the park was transferred to the City of Miami. The city closed the beach soon after, purportedly due to alleged high maintenance costs. Although the beach facilities quickly fell into disrepair, the story of Virginia Key Beach remained an important part of Black Miami's community history and the social history of the segregation era. In 2001 the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust was formed and in 2002, the park was placed on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance (NRIS #02000681). The nomination identified that Virginia Key Beach Park fulfills criterion A at the local level in the area of ethnic Heritage: Black and significant to the city and county's Black community's social history and recreation The nomination also identified the beachfront as a significant part of the setting and noted that the site retained a majority of its historic integrity. Virginia Key Beach, now Historic Virginia Key Beach Park, was reopened to the public in 2008 upon completion of a forty-million-dollar project to restore the park.[9]

Campgrounds

Camp Atwater: North Brookfield, Massachusetts (NRHP, 1982)
Youth Camp
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Health and Medicine
Period of Significance 1921–1964
Founded in 1921 by Dr. William N. DeBerry and the Springfield Urban League, Camp Atwater is the oldest American Camp Association accredited, African American owned and operated camp in the nation. Located on Lake Lashaway, Camp Atwater was established to provide recreational opportunities for the African American children of families who had moved to Springfield, Massachusetts during the Great Migration. The camp offered a safe, isolated space in nature where African Americans could escape racial discrimination while partaking in a wide range of outdoor recreational activities including basketball, soccer, boating, swimming, arts and crafts, tennis, archery, ballet, and drama classes. From its inception, the camp focused on advancing Black equality and promoting African American history and culture. Camp attendees developed lifelong national networks of important professional and social contacts. With 75 acres and 40 buildings, Camp Atwater remains capable of housing 180 campers and focuses on creating an environment both nurturing and fun for youths between 8 and 15. The camp continues to offer a variety of physical activities, along with classes on African and African American history, business skills concepts, choral singing, and career awareness. Most of the camp facilities are organized around a U-shaped drive, and include the main hall, recreation hall, dining hall, and camper cabins. Recreational facilities include a variety of sports fields. The

[9] For additional information on Virginia Key Beach, see Vicki L. Cole and Gary V. Goodwin, "Virginia Key Beach Park," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77843272; "Our History," Historic Virginia Key Beach Park Trust, accessed October 15, 2021, https://virginiakeybeachpark.net/our-history/; Roshan Nebhrajani, "White sand, black beach: the black history of Virginia Key," The New Tropic, accessed October 15, 2021, https://thenewtropic.com/virginia-key-beach/.

National Register Record for Camp Atwater has not been digitized and is not available online. The resource type is noted as a building. The integrity of Camp Atwater's setting and feeling appears to be intact but further study will be needed to determine the integrity of the camp and the potential for a historic district nomination.[10]

Camp Mueller: Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
Youth Camp
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Health and Medicine
Period of Significance: 1939–1964
Camp Mueller was one of only four African American owned and operated residential camps in the United States. Camp Mueller, a historically African American Summer Camp located in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park was established in 1939 by the Phillis Wheatley Association, a prominent African American social services organization. The camp provided recreational activities in a natural setting for inner city children in the Cleveland area reflecting the work done by numerous African American organizations that sought to provide urban Black youth the experience and enjoyment of nature. The camp is associated with a crucial period in Cleveland's African American history, particularly the settlement housing movement. Camp Mueller's mission today continues that tradition, providing a facility that fosters education, recreation, and social interaction through a camping experience offered in natural settings "where children can experience, understand, and appreciate the natural world and their dependence on it." Camp Mueller offers weekly day camp programs for Cleveland's African American youth "that teach the cultural values of the African American community." A 2019 request by the National Park Service for letters of interest for Ethnographic Overview & Assessment of Camp Mueller, described Camp Mueller as in good condition. Further study will be needed to determine the overall integrity of the camp and the potential for a historic district nomination.[11]

Country Clubs

Clearview Golf Club, East Canton, Ohio (NRHP, 2001)
Golf Course
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 5: Entertainment/Recreation
Period of Significance: 1948–1964
Clearview Golf Club is a rare example of a vernacular recreational landscape designed and constructed by an African American, the only public golf course in America designed, built, owned and operated by an African American. The course was designed, and built by hand by Bill Powell, a World War II veteran who encountered racial discrimination on segregated golf courses upon his return from the war. Powell and his financial backers purchased 78 acres of

[10] For additional information on Camp Atwater, see Elwood Watson, "Camp Atwater (1921–)," Blackpast.org, January 25, 2011, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/camp-atwater-1921/.
[11] For additional information on Camp Mueller, see United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Regional office, National Park Service and Cuyahoga Valley National Park, "Letter of Research Interest for Ethnographic Overview & Assessment of Camp Mueller, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio," 2019, accessed October 2021, https://in.nau.edu/cpcesu/funding-opportunity-national-park-service-camp-mueller/; Jennie Vasarhelyi, "Exploring Black History in Cuyahoga Valley," accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/exploring-black-history-in-cuyahoga-valley.htm.

farmland in East Canton and construction of the original nine-hole course began in 1946. Construction of the course, hand-built by Powell without the use of traditional golf maintenance equipment, would take two years and the course was opened to the public in 1948. In 1978 the course was expanded to 18 holes. The course was designed to take advantage of the hilly terrain and natural hazards, sparing as many trees as possible. Today it is recognized as a course that harmonizes with the landscape with design elements drawn from traditional British courses. Clearview Golf Club was added to the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2001 at the local level of significance (NRIS #01000056). The nomination included the entire expanded 18-hole course completed in 1978. The second nine holes are an integral part of Powell's overall plan and reflect Powell's philosophy for Clearview. The nomination notes the integrity of the entire landscape setting and feeling acknowledging that the principal significance of Clearview lies in the course itself, not in the ancillary buildings. Further study will be needed to determine the use and role of contributing resources during the period of significance including the pre-existing farmhouse and those resources and structures that supported golf course operations and demonstrate the potential for a historic district nomination.[12]

Local Parks/Swimming Pools

Emancipation Park, Houston, Texas
City Park
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1872–1964
Houston's Emancipation Park is a rare, early example of a local park established by an African American park association on city land purchased by the association. It is recognized as the oldest public park in Texas. In 1872, Houston's Antioch Baptist Church and Trinity Methodist Church formed the Colored People's Festival and Emancipation Park Association and purchased ten acres of open land in the city as a gathering place for their annual Juneteenth Celebration marking the date when the Emancipation Proclamation was formally instituted in Texas, thus freeing all enslaved persons within the state. In honor of their freedom, their gathering place was named Emancipation Park. By 1918, the park was acquired by the City of Houston and Emancipation Park would serve as Houston's only municipal park for African Americans until 1939. Over the years there have been significant additions and renovations to the park. In 1939 a WPA project added a community center building. The renovation of the community center and bath house, the construction of a new recreation center, swimming pool, entry plaza, and reconfigured parking was completed in 2017. Today, the park continues to serve as a place for both community gatherings and commemoration. Further study will be needed to determine what

[12] For additional information on Clearview Golf Club, see Michael Dokosi, "William J. Powell: First African-American to own a professional golf course," Face2Face Africa, March 23, 2020, https://face2faceafrica.com/article/william-j-powell-first-african-american-to-own-a-professional-golf-course; Jeffrey D. Brown, "Clearview Golf Club," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/71991458.

resources associated with Emancipation Park's period of national significance might still exist and the overall integrity of the park.[13]

Hadley Park, Nashville, Tennessee
City Park
Criterion: 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1912–1964
Established in 1912 on the site of a former plantation, Hadley Park, is believed to be the country's first municipal public park established exclusively for African Americans. The park's, location, between Fisk University and Tennessee State University, two historically African American institutions, made Hadley Park a central location for community gatherings and recreation. Today, the park's amenities include picnic shelters, a bandshell, baseball fields, a playground, grassy fields, a tennis center and a community center. The park's rolling terrain is shaded by large-canopy trees. Further study will be needed to determine what resources associated with Hadley Park's period of national significance might still exist and the overall integrity of the park.[14]

Washington Park, Chicago, Illinois (NRHP, 1992)
City Park
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1880s–1964
Washington Park, a 371-acre park on Chicago's South Side designed by Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux and constructed in the 1880s, featured a pastoral landscape that included a lagoon, large meadow, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and tree-lined pathways. Washington Park is representative of those local urban parks that became sites where Black migrants from the South sought to reconstitute the customs, cultural practices, and folkways of the places they left behind and reimagine Black culture and community. Beginning in 1930, Washington Park served as the site of Chicago's annual Black community picnic sponsored by the *Chicago Defender,* called Bud Billiken Day. Black Chicagoans from nearby neighborhoods came to Washington Park to partake in a variety of recreational activities including picnicking, fishing, boating, and skating on the frozen lagoon in winter. For many African Americans who came to Chicago during the great migration, the recreation activities at the park were reminiscent of popular pursuits they had enjoyed in the South. Playwright Lorraine Hansberry recounted the remunerative experience of her excursions to Washington Park, with her southern-born parents. For Hansberry, Washington Park was a place where grownups were invariably reminded of having been children in the South and a place where her parents told the best stories. Given Washington Park's close proximity to working-class and middle-class white neighborhoods, the park became a place where Chicago's elite Black residents attempted to moderate the sporting behavior of Black working-class park-goers. That class tension would remain until the neighborhoods surrounding Washington Park completed their racial transition from white to

[13] For additional information on Emancipation Park, see "History," Emancipation Park Conservancy, accessed October 15, 2021, https://epconservancy.org/mission-core/history/; "Economic Development: Projects-Emancipation Park," accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.houstontx.gov/ecodev/emancipation_park.html.
[14] For additional information on Hadley Park, see "Hadley Park," The Cultural Landscape Foundation, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.tclf.org/hadley-park; Jessica Bliss, "Petition seeks to change name of Hadley Park to Malcolm X Park," *The Tennessean*, June 2, 2018, https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2018/06/02/hadley-park-nashville-petition-seeks-change-name-malcolm-x-park/637309002/.

Black in the early 1930s. Washington Park was placed on the National Register of Historic places in 1992 as nationally significant for its design and urban planning (NRIS #04000871). Washington Park retains strong integrity and continues to reflect much of the original Olmsted and Vaux plan. Additional research will need to be undertaken to identify and assess those areas of the park closely associated with African American recreation and the annual Bud Billiken community picnic.[15]

Resorts

American Beach, Amelia Island, Florida (American Beach Historic District, NRHP, 2002)
Ocean Beach Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Performing Arts, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 2: Abraham Lincoln Lewis: Community planning and development
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Community planning and development
Period of Significance: 1935–1964

The Amelia Island resort community of American Beach is a rare example of a segregated planned ocean beach resort established by Black professionals. It thrived as one of the nation's premier resorts until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. American Beach was founded in 1935 by Abraham Lincoln Lewis, president of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company and one of Florida's first black millionaires. Lewis envisioned American Beach as a recreation resource and resort for his company's African American executives and employees. Initial lot sales, to "Negro citizens" were to be used to generate revenue for the company's employee pension fund. Property deeds specified the minimum cost of construction on new houses, prohibited gambling and alcohol sales and other "noxious" behaviors such as playing loud music. American Beach became known as "The Negro Ocean Playground" offering "recreation and relaxation without humiliation." The beach at American Beach and the town's nationally recognized food, hotels, and entertainment venues drew clientele from across the South and beyond, attracting large crowds well into the 1950s. American Beach's heyday as an African American Beach faded with integration and the extensive destruction caused by Hurricane Dora in 1964. Encroachment from corporate resorts posed a significant threat to American Beach from the 1990s until 2005. In 2002, the American Beach Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance and today the beach is visited by a wide variety of people (NRIS #01001532). Beachgoers are invited to learn about the town's rich history at the American Beach Museum's permanent exhibition "Sands of Time: An American Beach Story," which tells the story of American Beach through photographs, text, memorabilia, videography and a unique display on the legacy of "The Beach Lady," MaVynee Oshun Betsch, the late great-granddaughter of A. L. Lewis, one of American Beach's founders. Betsch was a prominent figure in American Beach, who worked tirelessly to protect the community's place in history. Today, American Beach's environmental and landscape setting retains a high degree of physical integrity and features Florida's tallest dune. American Beach's original street grid

[15] For additional information on Washington Park, see Julia Sniderman Bachrach, "Washington Park," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2004), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/28891042.

remains as do representative commercial buildings and cottages from the period of significance. American Beach has a high potential to be considered as a National Historic Landmark.[16]

Eagle Harbor/Cedar Haven, Eagle Harbor, Maryland
River Beach Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Community planning and development
Period of Significance: 1925–1964

The founding of Eagle Harbor, Maryland demonstrates the "promise of development" outside the crowded conditions of the city experienced daily by African Americans. Eagle Harbor was established in 1925 when John Stewart, an African American funeral director from Washington, DC joined with Lansdale Sasscer, a real estate developer and future congressman in Maryland, to buy farmland along the Patuxent River in Prince George's County, Maryland. On their newly purchased farmland, located less than an hour from Washington, DC, they founded the Village of Eagle Harbor. One thousand lots, twenty-five by one hundred feet, were plotted out and half-page advertisements in the Black press described a resort community away from the city with boating, beach-going along a four-thousand-foot-long sandy beach, and fishing in the Patuxent's waters. The developers found an eager market. Within months over seven hundred lots had sold, and small cottages were being built by the new landowners. The apparent success of Eagle Harbor prompted other Black investors to purchase land across the river from Eagle Harbor where they established the town of Cedar Haven. Soon, hotels and clubhouses were being built on both sides of the river. In 1929 Eagle Harbor was incorporated. Today, Eagle Harbor remains the smallest municipality in Maryland and a tranquil enclave of vacation cottages and year-round homes. Further study will be needed to identify period structures and to determine the overall integrity of the resort community and its potential for nomination as a historic district. As with other resort communities of this type, the assessment of feeling and setting will be particularly critical in order to determine which resources within this NHL Study List most outstandingly represent African American resort communities.[17]

[16] For additional information on American Beach, see "The Origins and History of American Beach," A. L. Lewis Museum, accessed October 15, 2021, https://americanbeachmuseum.org/origins-and-history/; "History of American Beach," Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/timu/learn/historyculture/ambch_history.htm; Marsha Dean Phelts, *An American Beach for African Americans* (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 2010); Joel McEachin and Robert O. Jones, "American Beach Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77843367.

[17] For additional information on Eagle Harbor and Cedar Haven, see Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*; "Eagle Harbor Community Description," Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.mncppcapps.org/planning/HistoricCommunitiesSurvey/CommunityDocumentations/87B-038%20Eagle%20Harbor/87B-038_Eagle%20Harbor%20Community%20Description.pdf.

Eureka Villa, Val Verde, California
Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Community planning and development
Period of Significance: 1925–1964
The founding of Eureka Villa evidences the nationwide scope of efforts by African Americans to establish resorts where they could gather together free from the oppressive strictures of life under Jim Crow. In 1924 a group of prominent Los Angeles African Americans, bought 1,000 acres in Santa Clarita Valley forty miles north of the city. There, they envisioned the creation of a vacation resort for African Americans, Eureka Villa, a place free from the prejudices and restrictions found in the city. The new resort would feature cabins on half-acre lots with a community house, tennis courts, baseball fields, hiking trails and a nine-hole golf course. Their plans quickly captured the imagination of potential buyers and by 1928 buyers from Los Angeles, nearby states, and from as far away as Chicago and Cleveland were buying lots and planning to build permanent residences. In 1939, the town changed its name to Val Verde, Spanish for Green Valley. In its heyday, vacationers both summered and wintered at Val Verde and went horseback riding in the nearby hills and swam at the Olympic-size pool, built with the assistance of the WPA, that opened in 1940. In 1947, 18,000 people, mostly African Americans, visited Val Verde for Labor Day. Nicknamed the Black Palm Springs, Val Verde would flourish until the Passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 ended segregation. Further study will be needed to determine what resources associated with Eureka Villa's period of national significance might still exist, the overall integrity of the resort community, and its potential for nomination as a historic district. As with other resort communities of this type, the assessment of feeling and setting will be particularly critical in order to determine which resources within this NHL Study List most outstandingly represent African American resort communities."[18]

Fox Lake, Angola, Indiana, (NRHP, 2001)
Lake Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Community planning and development
Period of Significance 1924–1964
Fox Lake is an example of the African American resort communities established to provide recreation opportunities for the growing Black middle class in America's industrial cities of the Midwest. In 1924, a group of white businessmen formed the Fox Lake Land Company and purchased land along the south side of Fox Lake for the development of Fox Lake, the first and only African American resort community established in Indiana. The original farmhouse on the property was converted into a small hotel, an existing barn was converted into a restaurant and

[18] For additional information on Eureka Villa, Val Verde, see Alison Rose Jefferson, "Leisure's Race, Power and Place: The Recreation and Remembrance of African Americans in the California Dream" (PhD diss., University of California Santa Barbara, 2015), accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.alexandria.ucsb.edu/downloads/h702q673n; Jennifer Swann, "When Val Verde was Eureka Villa: The neglected history of the town once known as 'the Black Palm Springs," Curbed Los Angeles, September 27, 2017, https://la.curbed.com/2017/9/27/16351910/val-verde-landfill-eureka-villa-history-california; Chris Ott, "Eureka Villa/Val Verde, California," Blackpast.org, January 23, 2007, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/eureka-villa-val-verde/.

dance hall, and a bathhouse and pier were constructed along with a few cottages built by the mid-1930s that were rented out until purchasers were found. The early landowners saw Fox Lake as a tranquil oasis where African Americans were welcome. As more Black families learned of Fox Lake, they began buying lots and constructing their own cottages and rental properties. Throughout the 1930s vacationers came to Fox Lake from Indianapolis and from other cities within a day's drive including Detroit, Chicago, Toledo, as well as smaller Indiana cities such as Marion and Fort Wayne. Word of the resort community continued to spread, and Fox Lake grew throughout the 1930s. Fox Lake hosted meetings of black fraternal and alumni organizations as well as church gatherings. Fox Lake also became a recreational destination for young African Americans who lived within easy driving distance. They came to Fox Lake to swim at the beach, dance, and socialize. In 2002 Fox Lake had 32 relatively modest lake cottages, most of which were constructed before World War II. Today, Fox Lake's many second- and third-generation cottage owners, maintain the community's tradition as a place of one's own where one could escape the heat and pressures of the city and enjoy the pleasures of outdoor summertime activities. The Fox Lake Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001 for statewide significance (NRIS #01000360). The nomination noted that the district "retains a fairly high degree of integrity." "Further study will be needed to determine the overall integrity of the Fox Lake Resort. As with other resort communities of this type, the assessment of feeling and setting will be particularly critical in order to determine which resources within this NHL Study List most outstandingly represent African American resort communities."[19]

Gulfside Assembly, Waveland, Mississippi
Ocean Beach Resort
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Health and Medicine, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Health and Medicine
Exception 1
Exception 3
Period of Significance: 1923–1964
Founded in 1923 by Bishop Robert E. Jones, the first African American episcopal leader of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Gulfside Chautauqua and Methodist Camp Meeting Ground was a 600-acre Chautauqua-style religious resort for African Americans and the first recreation facility on the Gulf Coast where African Americans could swim and had use of the beach. In 1924, the meeting ground was renamed the Gulfside Assembly, a place where Black and white Methodists could gather together unmolested and unafraid in spite of Mississippi's strict segregation laws. The Assembly offered African Americans a Chautauqua experience while also serving as both a place for retreats, as well as vacations. The Assembly also operated a year-round Poor Boys' School, a summer school for pastors, a summer seminary for prospective pastors, annual camps for boys and girls, and a working farm and vocational school for at-risk youth. In addition to the beach, the Assembly site included a YMCA, boys' and girls' reserves, along with picnic facilities. By the mid-1950s a chapel, inn, and auditorium had been built on the Assembly's grounds and the Assembly hosted racially integrated conferences and youth retreats.

[19] For additional information on Fox Lake, see Glory-June Greiff, "Fox Lake," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/132004815; Ronald J. Stephens, "Fox Lake, Angola, Indiana (1927–), February 4, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/fox-lake-angola-indiana-1927/

The Assembly also served as an important staging area for the ongoing fight against racism and segregation. In 1969, Hurricane Camille severely damaged the Assembly's facilities and all of the Assembly's structures were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In 2015, an open-air chapel was constructed at Gulfside. The Assembly's landscape setting has been recognized as an important part of the visitors' experience there. Gulfside's sand beach, hundreds of wooded acres, its giant oaks, the Gulf's moonlit waters, the flowing and ebbing of the tides, the stary heavens, and its walks, groves, picnic grounds, and the working farm all expressed the spirit of Gulfside and the communion with nature and each other. Additional research will need to be undertaken to identify the extent of the surviving resources and landscape features of this Chautauqua property and assess its integrity and potential as a historic district. An NHL nomination would also have to make a strong case for the application of Exception 1, a property which was owned or used by a religious organization, or Exception 3, the location of a resource no longer standing. The assessment of feeling and setting will be particularly critical in order to determine which resources within this NHL Study List most outstandingly represent African American resort communities."[20]

Highland Beach, Anne Arundel County, Maryland (Douglass Summer House/Twin Oaks NRHP, 1992)
Bay Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Community planning and development, Social History
Period of Significance: 1893–1964
Recognized as the first seaside resort owned and controlled by a Black man in America, Highland Beach is an exemplar of those resort communities established by elite African Americans as separate and private leisure worlds of their own during segregation. Highland Beach, on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay, was established in 1893 by Major Charles Douglass, a Civil War veteran and a son of Frederick Douglass, the famed African American humanitarian, orator and writer, after he and his wife were denied access to a nearby white resort. Frederick Douglass provided financial assistance for his son's endeavor and purchased a lot in Highland Beach in 1893. The initial sale of lots was offered to Douglass' family and friends and Major Douglass was the first to build a cottage at Highland Beach. His cottage, now demolished, was completed in 1894. A year later, Major Douglass completed construction of Twin Oaks a summer house built for his father, but which soon became a gathering place for prominent African Americans from Washington, DC and across the mid-Atlantic region. Originally intended as a summer resort, by 1915 Highland Beach was a year-round community with many houses and properties still retained by descendants of the original owners. In 1922, Highland Beach was incorporated becoming the first African American incorporated municipality in Maryland. After desegregation, interest in Highland Beach, and many other Black resorts, waned. But today, Highland Beach continues to preserve its history and among the town's year- round residents are descendants of Highland Beach's original families. "The integrity of Highland Beach appears quite high, with sixty homes from the period of national significance extant. The setting, with its original lots, the street grid, beach, bayside ecology, and

[20] For additional information on the Gulfside Assembly, see Michael Fate "Gulfside Assembly (1923)," Blackpast.org, April 23, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/gulfside-assembly-1923/; Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*.

sheltering trees remain in place, contributing to a strong feeling of an exclusive Black resort community and its potential for nomination as a historic district. The Douglass Summer House/ Twin Oaks was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 as a "building" at a local level of significance (NRIS #92000069). Highland Beach has a high potential to be considered as a National Historic Landmark.[21]

Idlewild, Lake County, Michigan (NRHP 1979, NRHP Boundary Expansion, 2010)
Lake Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Performing Arts, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black, Community planning and development
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development, Health and Medicine
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Entertainment/Recreation, Community planning and development, Health and Medicine
Period of Significance 1912–1964

In 1912, four white businessmen and their wives formed the Idlewild Resort Company and began the development of the Black resort community of Idlewild, Michigan. Idlewild was conceived as a much-needed recreation and leisure community and a strategic response to the widespread practices of systemic racism, discrimination, and segregation found at white resort facilities throughout the United States. Initially, The Idlewild Resort Company together with leading middle-class African Americans and professionals, members of the New Negro Movement, helped shape Idlewild into an intellectual and cultural center for African American elites and their families with sales directed towards members of the white collar and professional classes. Over time, however, Idlewild would also become a recreation and leisure destination for the working class as well. Recognized as the country's preeminent African American resort community, vacationers from all over the Middle West and from across the country came to Idlewild to enjoy the pleasures of beautiful scenery, swimming, boating, sun-bathing, picnicking, horseback riding, fishing, and hiking. They also came to socialize and see nationally recognized performers in Idlewild's many night clubs. Idlewild became known as the Summer Apollo of Michigan. During the off season the Arthur Braggs' Idlewild Review, developed at Braggs' Paradise Club, toured nightclubs and other venues in the South, Midwest, East coast and Canada. Idlewild's peak of popularity was from 1955–1962. "Today, the integrity of Idlewild remains high, and the essence of the early resort community is present in the extant architecture of cottages and houses, stores, motels and clubs. The important aspects of setting and feeling are retained through the lack of outside encroachment upon its natural setting: The community is surrounded by the woodlands of the Huron-Manistee National Forest, and the dominant presence of Idlewild and other neighboring lakes with their associated beaches. The lakes in particular emphasize the importance of the community as an outdoor recreation development." Today, most of the extant Idlewild residences are situated on several lots, with wooded areas between individual dwellings reinforcing the feeling of living in the woods. Because the trees and natural features of the area

[21] For additional information on Highland Beach, see Donna M. Ware, "Douglass Summer House (Twin Oaks)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/106776116; Kahrl *The Land Was Ours*; Elliot Partin, "Highland Beach, Maryland (1893–)," Blackpast.org, January 5, 2011, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/highland-beach-maryland-1893/; "A Brief History of Historic Highland Beach," Town of Highland Beach, Maryland, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.highlandbeachmd.org/.

are such an important part of the setting of Idlewild, the vacant and undeveloped lots, lakes, rivers, and swamps are considered contributing features in the Idlewild Historic District. Except for those roads that wound their way around the lakes, Idlewild's streets were organized on a north/south grid system crossed by regularly spaced east and west streets. For the most part the community roads are wide sand and gravel paths through the woods established when Idlewild was developed. Some roads that were originally developed have been abandoned. Only the major thoroughfares have been paved. The Idlewild Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 (NRIS #79001160) and a boundary increase was completed in 2010 at the national level of significance (NRIS #09001062). Idlewild has a high potential to be considered as a National Historic Landmark.[22]

Lake Elsinore, Riverside County, California
Lake Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all. Community planning and development
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Community planning and development
Period of Significance: 1910s–1955

African Americans were drawn to the Lake Elsinore Valley in the early 1900s by the area's hot springs and other natural attractions. The African American presence in the Valley evidences the nation-wide scope of efforts by African Americans to establish resorts outside of cities, places where they could gather together free from the oppressive strictures of daily life under Jim Crow. By 1910, a hotel that welcomed African American guests opened in the Valley and a few years later John Wesley Coleman, a former Pullman porter and Los Angeles real estate investor, opened the Hotel Coleman DeLuxe, a pleasure resort, on Lake Elsinore that offered safe accommodations and morally-upstanding leisure activities to the growing Black community in Southern California. Among the resort's amenities were hot sulfur showers and baths, a dining room, buffet, soda fountain, lunch counter, barber shop, bootblack stand, hairdressing parlor. In 1921, a group of Black investors from Los Angeles, formed the Lake Shore Beach Company to ensure that Black people would retain "a footing on the lake" and not be subject to harassment and exclusion. The company acquired 50 acres on the lake's northeastern corner and began selling lots to fellow Black Angelenos. By the late 1940s, Lake Elsinore, a two-hour drive from Los Angeles, had become, what *Ebony* magazine described as, the "best Negro vacation spot in the state," drawing a steady stream of Black musicians and celebrities, and supporting the largest Black hotel on the west coast and a number of entertainment venues. However, by the 1950s environmental and man-made factors caused lake levels to drop, and by 1955 the lake was dry. The lake remained largely dry until it was partially refilled in 1964. In 1995, the Lake Elsinore

[22] For additional information on Idlewild, see Ronald J. Stephens, *Idlewild: The Rise, Decline, and Rebirth of a Unique African American Resort Town* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013); Ronald J. Stephens, Idlewild, Michigan (1912–), Blackpast.org, January 5, 2011, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/idlewild-michigan-1912/; Ronald J. Stephens, "The Arthur Braggs Idlewild Review (1954–1964), Blackpast.org, March 3, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/arthur-braggs-idlewild-revue-idlewild-michigan-1954-1964/; Lewis Walker and Ben C. Wilson, *Black Eden: The Idlewild Community* (East Lansing: The Michigan State University Press, 2002); Lawrence Finfer, "Idlewild Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1979), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/25339789; Elaine H. Robinson, "Idlewild Historic District (Boundary Increase)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2010), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/25339785.

Management Project was implemented. That Project provides supplement water resources to maintain the Lake's water level and insure the optimum ongoing management of the lake. Further study would be needed to determine the existence and integrity of period features; the integrity of the overall landscape setting and feeling of Lake Elsinore; the integrity of the historic resort community's physical and visual relationship to the now highly-managed Lake Elsinore; and its potential for nomination as a historic district.[23]

Lake Ivanhoe, Bloomfield, Walworth County, Wisconsin
Lake Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development, Health and Medicine
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Community planning and development
Period of Significance: 1926–1964

Lake Ivanhoe is an example of those African American resort communities established to provide recreation opportunities for the growing Black middle class in America's industrial cities of the Midwest and nation-wide. In 1926, three Black Chicagoans aided by Ivan Bell, a white real estate agent from Evanston, Illinois, purchased Ryan Farm on Ryan's Lake in Bloomfield Township, Wisconsin. There the developers, established the 83-acre lake resort community Lake Ivanhoe, conceived as an exclusive resort for "well-to-do" Black "church going people of education and refinement" and a safe place for families to go and enjoy recreational opportunities away from dangers in the city," The developers named Lake Ivanhoe's streets after famous African Americans in history and added a beach on the lake-edge and a nearby pier with a high-dive. By 1927, Lake Ivanhoe featured one of the largest wooden-floored dance pavilions in the state with a veranda overlooking the newly renamed Lake Ivanhoe. The pavilion's opening included a performance from Cab Calloway and his band and Black Chicagoans soon flocked to Lake Ivanhoe for the weekend entertainment offered there. Other amenities included a soda fountain and restaurant. Lake Ivanhoe's heyday as a Black resort was ended by the Great Depression, which led to the foreclosure of many unsold lots, and the dismantling of the dance pavilion. With the end of the Depression and the U.S. entry into World War II, property sales at Lake Ivanhoe increased. Many of the new residents in the Lake Ivanhoe community were members of the working class. No longer a strictly African American resort community, today Lake Ivanhoe remains a gathering place for African American Families. "Further study will be needed to determine what resources associated with Lake Ivanhoe's period of national significance might still exist, the resort's overall integrity, and its potential for nomination as a historic district. As with other resort communities of this type, the assessment of feeling and setting will be particularly critical in order to determine which resources within this NHL Study List most outstandingly represent African American resort communities.[24]

[23] For additional information on Lake Elsinore, see Jefferson, "Leisure's Race, Power and Place"; Hadley Meares, "A look Back at California's Long-Lost Black Beaches and Vacation Spots," accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.lamag.com/culturefiles/african-american-beaches-leisure-history/.
[24] For additional information on Lake Ivanhoe, see Lisa M. Schmelz, "Building a Dream: How three men created a lakeside haven for 'discriminating colored people," accessed October 15, 2021, http://www.lisaschmelz.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/Lake_Ivanhoe.239125009.pdf; Pete Wicklund, "Lake Ivanhoe an African-American Landmark," *The Journal Times*, February 17, 2001,

Lake Placid, Stover, Missouri
Lake Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Health and Medicine, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development, Health and Medicine
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Community planning and development, Health and Medicine
Period of Significance: 1937–1964

Lake Placid is an exemplar of an enduring African American lake resort community developed around a man-made lake. In 1934, two Black professionals, a newspaper man and doctor, purchased 346 woodland acres in the Missouri Ozarks, land on which to develop "a recreational center for colored people." 33'x100' lots were platted and a golf course and lake were imagined on the wooded site. Unable to afford the construction of a dam on the property, they successfully sought federal support through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the dam needed to create the 15-acre Lake Placid was completed in the summer of 1937. The first cabins had been built by the lake's site before the dam was even completed and the resort community of Lake Placid soon welcomed a variety of Black professionals to its wooded shores. Lake Placid quickly became a place to relax without having to suffer the indignities of racial segregation. It was a place within nature, a place not available in the inner city. A formal development company was incorporated in 1939 and in 1940 the Lake Placid Lot Owner's Association was formed and implemented fishing regulations and restrictions on the use of motor boats. The Association also initiated efforts to limit the access to the lake by non-owners. Over time, a concrete dock was constructed and fishing, boating, dancing, card playing, and picnics were common recreational pastimes. Lake Placid thrived after WWII reflecting both the growth of the Black middle class and the mid-west's persistent Jim Crow racism. Church groups, fraternities and sororities and travelers' clubs all visited Lake Placid and large crowds were common on the 4th of July. Interest in Lake Placid declined with the coming of desegregation in the 1960s, but today second and third generation vacationers have led a resurgence of this "island of paradise" in the Missouri Ozarks. "Further study will be needed to confirm the extent of resources associated with Lake Placid's period of national significance, to assess the resort's overall integrity, and its potential for nomination as a historic district. As with other resort communities of this type, the assessment of feeling and setting will be particularly critical in order to determine which resources within this NHL Study List most outstandingly represent African American resort communities."[25]

https://journaltimes.com/news/local/lake-ivanhoe-an-african-american-landmark/article_6eeb87f0-33da-5b44-b34e-e97e9c4b233c.html.

[25] For additional information on Lake Placid, see Gary R. Kremer and Evan P. Orr, "Lake Placid: 'A Recreational Center for Colored People in the Missouri Ozarks,'" in *The Ozarks in Missouri History: Discoveries in an American Region* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2013), 171–184.

Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts
Ocean Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development
Criterion 5: Resort Community: Community planning and development
Period of Significance: early 1900s to 1964

Oak Bluffs is an example of a resilient African American Resort Community that has coalesced over time and gained a national presence. Free Blacks working in the fishing and whaling industries were an early presence on Martha's Vineyard. Freed slaves found shelter there in the nineteenth century and other Blacks later came to the island as servants of white island vacationers or to attend revival meetings. Among those Blacks attracted to the island by revival meetings was Charles Shearer, who first came to the island to attend religious services in Baptist Temple Park. Charles and his wife Henrietta grew to love Martha's Vineyard and the town of Oak Bluffs overlooking Nantucket Sound and purchasing their first property on the island in the late 1800's and becoming year-round island residents. In 1903 they purchased their second property overlooking Baptist Temple Park and within walking distance of downtown Oak Bluffs. There, Henrietta opened a laundry serving the island's white summer residents. In 1912 the couple added a twelve-room cottage to the property and opened a seasonal inn, the Shearer Cottage, the first African American-owned guest house on Martha's Vineyard. Replete with tennis courts, the Shearer Cottage along with the "Inkwell," Oak Bluff's popular town beach helped anchor a growing Black enclave on the island in the decades that followed. A "who's who" of prominent African Americans would be attracted to Shearer Cottage and many would purchase cottages in Oak Bluffs. In 1998, Martha's Vineyard opened the island's African American Heritage Trail to tell the stories of the island's rich African Americans heritage. The first stop on the trail is the Shearer Cottage. Further study will be needed to accurately map and determine the timeline of the development of the fabric and setting of the African American resort community on Martha's Vineyard and its potential for nomination as a historic district. Oak Bluffs has a high potential as a National Historic Landmark.[26]

[26] For additional information on Oak Bluffs, see "Trail Sites," The African-American Heritage Trail of Martha's Vineyard, accessed October 15, 2021, https://mvafricanamericanheritagetrail.org/; Shelly Christiansen, "The Shearer Family, Keepers of the Inn," *Martha's Vineyard*, June 22, 2002, https://mvmagazine.com/news/2012/06/22/shearer-family-keepers-inn; "The Story of Shearer Cottage," The Inn at Shearer Cottage, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.shearercottage.com/history; Alison Rose Jefferson, "The Inkwell, Martha's Vineyard (1890s–)," Blackpast.org, February 7, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/inkwell-martha-s-vineyard-1890s/.

Sag Harbor SANS Subdivisions, Sag Harbor, New York (NRHP, 2019)
Ocean Beach Resort Community
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion: 3: Opportunity for all: Community planning and development
Criterion 5: Entertainment/Recreation, Community planning and development
Period of Significance 1947–1964

In the 1940s and 1950s, three subdivisions, Sag Harbor Hills, Azurest, and Ninevah were established in the small village of Sag Harbor on the eastern end of Long Island. [27] Collectively known as SANS, they became summer home destinations for urban middle and upper middle-class African Americans and their families. There, they enjoyed summers on the beach, parties with their friends and families, and relative safety from discrimination during the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras. Today, SANS remains one of the most exclusive places on the east coast for professionals, politicians, and academics of color to vacation. Its beaches "continue to be, a place of congregation for SANS residents and visitors and a setting for social connections as well as intellectual conversation and civil rights planning."[28]

The first subdivision, Azurest, was laid out in 1947 by African American sisters Maude Terry and Amaza Lee Meredith who had purchased 20 acres of undeveloped land from a white landowner. The first lots were sold to Black professionals and middle-class families from New York City who were friends and acquaintances of the sisters. They had recognized Azurest as the opportunity to own a vacation home with access to a protected beach in a place where they could escape, if only for a time, the oppressive conditions of segregation. Vacationers soon began building summer cottages nestled among the trees and facing the calm waters of Long Island Sound. The lots at Azurest quickly sold out and two more subdivisions, Sag Harbor Hills and Ninevah, were created in the early 1950s. The layout of the neighborhoods emphasized beach access and conservation along with the development of beach-front property. The three summer communities, composed of professionals and their families, many of whom were members of shared social networks, were closely knit with a sense of exclusivity. For all, summers at Sag Harbor offered a stark contrast to their lives in the city.

The SANS Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2019 at the local level of significance (NRIS #100004217). The nomination notes that the district, "characterized by mid-century suburban lot sizes and contemporary residential architecture in a seaside setting," retains "strong" integrity especially in terms of its location and setting. [29] Contributing district resources also "retain significant integrity of design and materials…The homes within the community are nearly exclusively wood frame. Clapboard, shingle, asbestos and masonry veneer siding were the most common historic finishes."[30]

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[27] For additional information on Sag Harbor SANS Subdivisions, see Allison McGovern, edited by Jennifer Betsworth, "Sag Harbor Hills, Azurest, and Ninevah Beach Subdivisions Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2019), https://ncshpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SANS-NR.pdf.
[28] "175th Historic Preservation State Review Board Meeting Notes," March 20, 2019, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.parks.ny.gov/documents/newsroom/175thHPStateReviewBoardMeetingNotes.pdf.
[29] "Sag Harbor Hills, Azurest, and Ninevah Beach Subdivisions Historic District," Section 7, pg. 4.
[30] "Sag Harbor Hills, Azurest, and Ninevah Beach Subdivisions Historic District," Section 7, pg. 7.

Many homes at SANS were built with provisions for later expansion and "those additions and expansions completed within the period of significance were determined to reflect the history and maturation of the community."[31]

Sag Harbor SANS Subdivisions have a high potential to be considered as a National Historic Landmark. Further study will be needed to determine the integrity of SANS to determine if a district designation should consider parts of one, two or all three of the subdivisions. As with other resort communities of this type, the assessment of feeling and setting will be particularly critical in order to determine which resources within this NHL Study List most outstandingly represent African American resort communities.

Seabreeze/Freeman Beach, Wilmington, New Hanover County, North Carolina
Ocean Beach Resort
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1922–1964

In contrast to those resorts that catered to upper- and middle-class Blacks, Freeman Beach, established in 1922 near Wilmington, North Carolina and known to vacationers as Seabreeze, developed into a commercial, leisure and entertainment mecca that welcomed all classes of people. At Seabreeze, people were welcomed as they were and invited to enjoy nature on their own terms in a place to vacation, relax, and play. By day, church groups and families could enjoy a variety of vacation activities at the beaches' hotels, beach cottages, restaurants, boat pier, bingo parlor, and small amusement park complete with a Ferris Wheel. Evening entertainment focused on more adult forms of recreation with numerous dance halls and 31 "juke joints," where vacationers danced and listened to music. During the summer months thousands of visitors flocked to the area. The beach at Seabreeze was plagued by erosion after the opening of the artificial Carolina Beach Inlet in 1952 and major damage from Hurricane Hazel in 1954 further impacted Seabreeze's alure. By the late 1960s, desegregation had opened previously segregated beaches to African Americans and Freeman Beach had lost many of its summer visitors. In the twenty-first century, development pressures have posed a significant threat to the beach community at Seabreeze. While the community still has a number of year-round residents, hurricanes have continued to damage and destroy structures at Seabreeze. Further study will be needed to confirm the extent of resources associated with Seabreeze's period of national significance, and to assess the resort's overall integrity. As with other resort communities of this type, the assessment of feeling and setting will be particularly critical in order to determine which resources within this NHL Study List most outstandingly represent African American resort communities.[32]

[31] "Sag Harbor Hills, Azurest, and Ninevah Beach Subdivisions Historic District," Section 7, pg. 7.
[32] For additional information on Seabreeze/Freeman Beach, see Jennifer Bower, "Our Coast: A Shelter During Segregation," CoastalReview.org, September 18, 2015, https://coastalreview.org/2015/09/our-coast-seabreeze/; Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*; Ronald J. Stephens, "Freeman Beach-Seabreeze, Wilmington, North Carolina (CA 1885)," Blackpast.org, March 9, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/freeman-beach-seabreeze-wilmington-north-carolina-ca-1885/.

State Parks

Jones Lake State Park, Elizabethtown, Bladen County, North Carolina
State Park
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for All: Entertainment/Recreation
Period of Significance: 1936–1964

Jones Lake State Park, in the bay lakes region of Bladen County, North Carolina, was established in 1939 as the first state park in North Carolina opened for African Americans. In 1940 Jones Lake State Park was one of only seven state park facilities scattered across the entire South that were available to African Americans. It remains an exemplar of those state parks created for African Americans in response to pressure from civil rights organizations and the central role state parks would play in the 1950s when equal access to state parks became a frontline for America's Civil Rights movement. By 1935, exhaustive farming practices and the growth of the turpentine and lumber industries had severely depleted the land around Jones Lake and Salters Lake and in that year the federal government purchased the submarginal lands around the two lakes. Between 1936 and 1939 the land was managed by the Resettlement Administration which developed a recreation center at Jones Lake that included a large bathhouse, beach, refreshment stand and picnic grounds. In 1939, Jones Lake was taken under the control of the state of North Carolina under a lease agreement and in 1954 the land was given to the state of North Carolina. Jones Lake State Park was a popular recreation space for African Americans and a place for family gatherings, baptisms, and church picnics before it was integrated along with other North Carolina parks in the 1960s. Today, the park's bay forest has regrown and the park features diverse natural communities with typical bay vegetation. Jones Lake State Park is today open to all North Carolinians for year-round outdoor recreation, including camping, fishing, boating, hiking, and environmental education. Further study will be needed to determine the existence and integrity of period features and the overall integrity of the park.[33]

[33] For more information on Jones Lake State Park, see Lane Garner and John Privette, "Mysterious Lakes in Bladen County," North Carolina State Parks, April 16, 2017, https://ncstateparks.wordpress.com/2017/04/16/mysterious-lakes-in-bladen-county/; O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*..

Properties Removed from Further Study

Amusement Parks

Suburban Gardens Amusement Park, Washington, DC
Amusement Park
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1921–1940s
Opened in 1921, Suburban Gardens Amusement Park, the only amusement park built within the District of Columbia, offered a recreational haven for African Americans who were barred from whites-only amusement parks outside the city. The amusement park was developed by the Universal Development and Land Company whose owners included H. D. Woodson, one of the few black licensed architectural engineers in the city. Woodson designed portions of the city's Union Station, government buildings, churches, and numerous private buildings in Washington, DC. The seven-acre Amusement Park featured a Ferris Wheel, coaster, an aero-swing, over twenty concessionaires, a fully-equipped free children's playground, a swimming pool, over a mile of macadam roadway, and a large dancing pavilion that hosted performances by nationally recognized performers including Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway. Suburban Gardens was a popular recreation destination for Black Washingtonians throughout the 1920s and 30s. In 1928 Suburban Gardens was sold to white theater owner Abe Lichtman. The amusement park closed in the 1940s and the site was redeveloped for apartment buildings.[34]

The historical resources from the period of potential national significance are gone. Other resources are now located on the property. This property lacks the high historic integrity needed for a National Historic Landmark designation.

Beaches

Butler Beach, Anastasia Island, St. Johns County, Florida
Ocean Beach
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1927–1964
Butler Beach is a regional example of an African American resort that became a popular and safe stopping point for the growing number of Blacks traveling by auto on highway A1A during the Jim Crow and segregation era. In 1927, Frank B. Butler, an African American, began purchasing oceanfront property on Anastasia Island, Florida. Eventually, Butler acquired a tract stretching across the island from the Atlantic to the Matanzas River. He named the property Butler Beach and opened it to African Americans. Butler Beach was the only stretch of beach between Daytona Beach and American Beach, north of Jacksonville, where African Americans were allowed to enjoy the sand and the sea. Butler built bathhouses and a motel and installed a merry-go-round and picnic facilities for beachgoers. Butler built a home for his family at the beach and

[34] For additional information on Suburban Gardens Amusement Park, see John Kelly, "Remembering Suburban Gardens, D.C.'s only amusement park," *Washington Post*, accessed October 26, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/remembering-suburban-gardens-dcs-only-amusement-park/2013/10/26/62bb1c9a-3d72-11e3-a94f-b58017bfee6c_story.html; "Suburban Gardens Site, African American Heritage Trail," Cultural Tourism DC, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.culturaltourismdc.org/portal/suburban-gardens-site-african-american-heritage-trail.

sold lots to other prospective homeowners. In 1937, Butler opened the Sea Breeze Kaseno and later the Butler Inn. Eventually, 11 black-owned businesses were operating at Butler Beach serving both beachgoers and highway travelers. Martin Luther King was staying at Frank Butler's Inn during the 1964 wade-in at the white beaches in nearby St. Augustine, which had become a major focus of the Civil Rights Movement. With the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Butler Beach's appeal as a Blacks-only destination ended. As the value of beachfront property increased, developers purchased most of the beachfront land and transformed Butler Beach into the condos and large homes found there today.[35]

The historical resources from the period of potential national significance are gone. Other resources are now located on the property. This property lacks the high historic integrity needed for a National Historic Landmark designation

Lincoln Beach, New Orleans, Louisiana
Lake Beach and Amusement Park
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Social History, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1940–1964

Lincoln Beach, a lakeside beach and amusement park for African Americans on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain was established in 1940. The beaches' location was far from ideal and was emblematic of the separate and unequal recreation properties set aside for African Americans in Jim Crow cities. The new amusement park was 14 miles from the city center, far from most Black neighborhoods, and inaccessible by public city transportation. The property was also adjacent to 175 fishing camps that by 1941 were dumping raw sewage within three miles of the new beach. The pollution from the camps was so severe that the lake water at the beach was deemed unfit for bathing. The beach remained open, however, and a bathhouse and a few amusement rides were added to Lincoln Park prior to 1953. That year the city of New Orleans undertook a major renovation and expansion of the park facilities. The renovations included expanding both the white sand beach and the park's midway, with its rides and Ferris wheel. A new bathhouse, a restaurant with a rooftop terrace for dancing were added along with a swimming pool, a deep-water diving pool, and a wading pool. A picnic ground with picnic shelters was developed across the highway from the beach on Lake Pontchartrain. Lincoln Beach hosted summer camps for underprivileged Black youth and became a popular attraction and important cultural space within the black community. A vibrant, summer season night life developed there after the renovations were completed and the Beach was chosen as the site of the annual Negro State Fair. Lincoln Beach soon became a state-wide recreation attraction. Despite its success, the city abruptly closed the park shortly after the passage of the Civil Rights act of 1964 and the end of segregation. Today the ten-acre beach property is overgrown and the resources that remain from the 1960s have continued to deteriorate. It is currently being used as an illegal dump site and there has been no assessment of damage to the property by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The city completed a Site Assessment Report in April 2021 to assess the

[35] For additional information on Butler Beach, see "Butler Beach and Jim Crow," State Library and Archives of Florida, May 5, 2014, October 15, 2021, https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/295168; "African-American History by the Sea on Florida's Historic Coast: Historic Butler Beach offer a glimpse of African-American history and America's race relations," St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches, May 19, 2020, https://www.floridashistoriccoast.com/blog/african-american-history-sea-floridas-historic-coast/.

property's existing condition and the possible return of the site to public use. The Site Assessment Report identified that all existing structures within the site pose a safety risk.[36]

The historical resources from the period of potential national significance are gone or severely compromised. This property lacks the high historic integrity needed for a National Historic Landmark designation.

Campgrounds

Green Pastures Camp: Grass Lake, Michigan
Youth Camp
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Criterion 3: Opportunity for All: Entertainment/Recreation, Health and Medicine
Period of Significance 1931–1964
Green Pastures Camp was an example of those campgrounds and rural retreats established during the Great Migration era that were dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Black urban populations through facilitating access to natural settings outside of America's industrial cities. The National Urban League was formed in 1910 in part to assist African Americans moving from the rural south during the Great Migration adjust to life in the large urban centers of the north. Green Pastures Camp, established in 1931, with a gift from the Children's Fund of Michigan, was one of the most successful programs offered by the Detroit Urban League. The camp, where campers slept in cottages and ate healthy meals, provided much needed outdoor recreation for Detroit children in a healthful environment. Urban league officials claimed the camp offered camp attendees a "variety of scenery" and "everything that is beautiful in Country life." For many children, a trip to Green Pastures was their first time out of the city for a first-hand experience of nature. Swimming was a major activity at the camp with campers swimming up to three times a day. Boating and fishing were also popular activities on the lake. Approximately 15,000 children attended the camp in its 3 decades of operation. Green Pastures closed in 1965 due to a lack of funds and the site is no longer extant.[37]

The historical resources from the period of potential national significance are gone. This property lacks the high historic integrity needed for a National Historic Landmark designation.

[36] For additional information on Lincoln Beach, see Paper Monuments, Danielle Abrams, and L. Jeffrey Andrews, "Lincoln Beach," New Orleans Historical, accessed October 16, 2021, https://neworleanshistorical.org/items/show/1508; New Orleans Department of Public Works, "Lincoln Beach Site Assessment," City of New Orleans, accessed October 15, 2021 https://nola.gov/next/public-works/topics/lincoln-beach-site-assessment/; Digital Engineering, "Lincoln Beach Site Assessment Report," April 2021, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.nola.gov/nola/media/DPW/Lincoln-Beach/20210416_Lincoln_Beach_Final_Site_Assessment.pdf.
[37] For additional information on Green Pastures Camp, see Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, "1916: The Detroit Urban League Formed," MotorCities National Heritage Area, accessed October 15, 2021, https://motorcities.org/images/making_tracks/1916-The-Detroit-Urban-League.pdf.

Resorts

Bransford Summer Resort, Mammoth Cave, Kentucky
Rural Resort
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1921–1934
The Bransford Summer Resort featured a two story 14 room hotel for Black travelers visiting Mammoth Cave. Sited on 75 acres, the resort illustrates an example of a post-emancipation entrepreneurial opportunity for formerly enslaved African Americans that emerged from their long history with early white spaces of leisure and recreation. Its story also illustrates the prejudices that would undermine those opportunities over time. Enslaved African American men, including members of the Bransford family, had served as cave guides leading tours of the subterranean passageways at Mammoth Cave, Kentucky since 1838 and Bransford men continued to work as cave guides long after emancipation. Mammoth Cave remained a popular tourist destination throughout the nineteenth century and into the early decades of the twentieth century, but no lodgings were available there for African American visitors. In 1921 Matt Bransford, a cave guide, and his wife Zemmie opened the Bransford Summer Resort, also known as the Bransford Hotel, the only lodging for African American tourists near Mammoth Cave. Resort patrons could also fish and swim in the nearby Green River. Five years later, in 1926, Mammoth Cave was authorized to be a National Park by the federal government. Despite the Bransford family's long association with Mammoth Cave, the Bransfords were forced to close their hotel and sell their 75 acres of land in 1934 as 73,000 acres surrounding Mammoth Cave was assembled for the new national park. All of the residents of the African American community of Flint Ridge, where the Bransfords lived, also were forced to sell their land. In 1931 there were eight Bransford men serving as cave guides at Mammoth Cave. No Black cave guides were retained by the National Park Service when the new National Park opened in 1941. Research has failed to find any references to extant traces of Bransford Resort.[38]

The historical resources from the period of potential national significance have not been located. This property lacks the high historic integrity needed for a National Historic Landmark designation.

Bay Shore Beach, Hampton, Virginia
Ocean Beach Resort and Amusement Park
Criterion 1: Entertainment/Recreation, Performing Arts, Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance: 1897–1964
In 1897, a decade after the opening of Buckroe Beach, a popular white amusement park, in Hampton, Virginia, nine black entrepreneurs, including Hampton Institute bookkeeper Frank D. Banks and seafood magnate John Mallory Phillips, a Hampton Institute graduate, formed the Bay Shore Hotel Corporation and bought six acres of land, including 100 yards of beach, only 300 yards from Buckroe Beach. A four-room cottage for vacationers was added the following summer. From this modest beginning would develop one of the nation's premier Black vacation

[38] For additional information on Bransford Summer resort, see Katie Algeo, "Underground Tourists/Tourists Underground: African American Tourism to Mammoth Cave," *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment* 15, no. 3 (2013): 380–404, accessed October 15, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2012.675514.

spots. Bay Shore Beach was among those resorts that took advantage of improved rail and trolly lines that brought vacationers and excursioners to leisure and recreation at the water's edge. By 1913, Bay Shore had expanded its accommodations to 32 rooms. Bay Shore's popularity grew and by 1928, Bay Shore boasted 60 rooms and was a frequent destination for gatherings of Black professional organizations from up and down the East coast and throughout the Midwest. Famed Black entertainers, such as Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald, packed the dance hall, helping to draw tourists to Bay Shore Beach from as far away as Chicago. Period advertisements noted the resort's bathing beach, bathhouse, social hall, beach pavilion, beer garden, boating, amusements, and good fishing. In 1933, a hurricane severely damaged the hotel and the resort attractions and Bay Shore struggled to recover. While its heyday may have passed, Bay Shore continued to attract a large number of Black vacationers until the end of segregation. The Bay Shore Hotel closed in 1973 and was demolished in 1977. The land was subsequently purchased by a developer and the site of Bay Shore redeveloped as a gated community.[39]

The historical resources from the period of potential national significance are gone. Other resources are now located on the property. This property lacks the high historic integrity needed for a National Historic Landmark designation.

Carr's Beach and Sparrow's Beach, Annapolis, Maryland
Bay Beach Resort and Amusement Park,
Criterion 1: <u>Entertainment/Recreation, Performing Arts, Ethnic Heritage-Black</u>
Period of Significance:1920s–1973
The story of Carr's Beach and the adjacent Sparrow's Beach is a compelling story of the evolution of a local African American picnic ground into a major recreation venue on the Chitlin Circuit, a place central to the dissemination of Black music and popular culture. The Carr family purchased the farmland that would become Carr's Beach in 1902. By the 1920s they had established a picnic ground on the site that catered to church groups, fraternal clubs, and day-trippers from nearby Washington, DC, Baltimore, and Annapolis.

The Carr's picnic ground would develop into a popular summertime recreation destination for working-class Black families from throughout the mid-Atlantic region. The popularity of the picnic ground led to the founding of Carr's Beach in 1926. Within six years, the popularity of Carr's Beach led the extended Carr family to open the adjacent Sparrow's Beach in 1931. Advertisements for Sparrows Beach noted the sand beach, the shaded picnic grove, rides, and concessions as well as boating, fishing, swimming, dining, and dancing. The two beaches were operated by the family until the death of Elizabeth Carr Sparrow in 1948 and the formation of the Carr's Beach Amusement Company by a group of Black investors from Baltimore that included William L. Adams. Under Adam's guidance, Carr's Beach would continue to play a formative role in the dissemination of Black music and popular culture serving as a major stop on the Chitlin Circuit. Saturday night and Sunday afternoon performances in the beach pavilion and bandstand by jazz and soul artists and Rock and Roll pioneers drew tens of thousands of visitors from diverse racial backgrounds to Carr's Beach and Sparrow's Beach from throughout the Mid-

[39] For additional information on Bay Shore Beach, see Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*; Ronald J. Stephens, "Buckroe Beach, Hampton, Virginia (1890–), Blackpast.org, March 9, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/buckroe-beach-hampton-virginia-1898/.

Atlantic region. But, with the end of segregation in 1964, the large crowds no longer came and the beaches' hosted their last live performances in 1973. The beaches closed for good in 1974 and the site was redeveloped into a high-end gated community and marina.[40]

The historical resources from the period of potential national significance are gone. Other resources are now located on the property. This property lacks the high historic integrity needed for a National Historic Landmark designation.

Further Studies

Conducting further comparative studies of properties associated with African American Outdoor recreation is recommended. African American outdoor recreational spaces were vulnerable to dispossession, physical destruction, and loss. As a result, many African American recreation properties were short-lived and their physical traces are no longer extant. The records of the lost sites often exist in archival resources that have yet to be fully researched including the Black press and the records of Black churches and social societies as well as private family archives. Additional efforts to locate and study these resources may help to facilitate the identification and more detailed knowledge of distinct, but contextually and thematic related properties now lost and offer comparisons with existing properties identified as possessing national significance. For National Historic Landmarks, additional study of these resources may add to our understanding and inventory of additional African American outdoor recreation properties of national importance and influence. The following groups of identified property types related to African American Outdoor Recreation that may benefit from further study.

Resorts. Additional study of specific recreation activities and natural and man-made features found at many short-lived and no longer extant resorts can deepen our understanding of the collective regional fabric of African American resorts nation-wide. The additional study of these resources can also contextualize the relationship between increased middle-class African American automobile ownership and the increased popularity and expansion of resorts.

State Parks. The development of segregated African American state parks in the south reflected the segregationist doctrine of separate but equal public facilities. More detailed comparisons of the selection of segregated park sites and the natural features, recreation facilities, and the nature experience at the segregated parks with the sites, natural features, recreation facilities, and nature experiences at white state parks will enhance our understanding of the embedded inequality of segregation's separate but equal doctrine and its impact on public outdoor recreation in the study period.

Picnic Grounds. Among the earliest recreation sites, picnic grounds were often associated with excursions organized by churches, social clubs, and self-help societies. The genesis, exact location, and ownership of many picnic grounds have yet to be identified. Further study of the early picnic grounds could enhance our understanding of the shared social experiences at the

[40] For additional information on Carr's Beach and Sparrow's Beach, see "The Beach," Carr's Beach.com, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.carrsbeach.com; Andrew Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*; Preston Lauterbach, *The Chitlin' Circuit and the Road to Rock and Roll* (New York: Norton, 2011); Ronald J. Stephens, "Carr and Sparrow's Beach, Annapolis, Maryland (1926–1974)," Blackpast.org, April 23, 2014, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/carr-and-sparrow-s-beach-annapolis-maryland-1926-1974/.

early picnic grounds and provide additional documentation of the development and evolution of picnic grounds into other recreation typologies.

Youth Camps. Comparison studies of recreation and nature experiences at youth camps that drew campers from different cities and urban contexts offers the opportunity to provide a deeper understanding of the regional variations of these important recreation venues.

Part D: Appendices

Appendix A: Sites by State

For more information, see the accompanying digital project
"African Americans and the Great Outdoors"
(https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/african-americans-and-the-great-outdoors.htm)

Alabama

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Joe Wheeler State Park Negro Recreation Area Lauderdale County	State Park	c.1952/1953-present
Mon Louis Island Mobile County	Beach	c. 1934-late 1930s
Tuxedo Park Birmingham	Amusement Park	1920s-1930s
Wilson Dam Muscle Shoals	State Park	1930s-Present

Arizona

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Eastlake Park Phoenix	Local Park	1890s-present
Irvine Park Phoenix	Amusement Park	1919-1923

Arkansas

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Crystal Bathhouse Hot Springs	Resort, spa	1904-1913
Harding Spring Eureka Springs	Resort, spa	1880s-1930s
Independent Bathhouse Hot Springs	Resort, spa	1880s-1974
Pythian Bathhouse and Sanitarium Hot Springs	Resort, spa	1914-1974
Townsend Park Pine Bluff	Local Park	1937-Present
Watson State Park Pine Bluff	State Park	1937-1944
Woodmen of the Union Hot Springs	Resort, spa	1922-1983

California

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Bay Street (Santa Monica Well/Inkwell) Santa Monica	Beach	1905-1964
Bruce's Beach Manhattan	Beach	1912-1920s
Lake Elsinore Lake Elsinore	Resort, lake	1910s-1960s
Murray's Dude Ranch Apple Valley	Resort, ranch	1922-1960
Muse-A-While Ranch Perris Ranch	Resort, ranch	1934-c.1979
Pacific Beach Club Huntington Beach	Resort, ocean	1926
Raglan's Guest Ranch Victorville	Resort, ranch	1949-unknown
Val Verde (Eureka Villa) Los Angeles County	Resort	1924-1960s

Colorado

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Camp Nizhoni (YWCA) Lincoln Hills	Campground	1924-1944
Lincoln Hills Lincoln Hills	Resort, mountain	1922-present
Mountain Studio Lodge Dumont	Resort, mountain	1950s
Wink's Panorama Lodge Lincoln Hills	Resort, mountain	1925-1965

Connecticut

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Dadd's West Hotel West Haven	Resort, ocean	c. 1943-c. 1961
Lee Haven Beach Club Byram	Resort, ocean	1949-1952
Sea View Hotel West Haven	Resort, ocean	1950s

Delaware

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Rosedale Beach and Hotel Resort, Millsboro	Resort, ocean	1900s-1970s

District of Columbia

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Camp Pleasant Washington DC area	Campground	1936-1950s
Eureka Park Washington	Local Park	ca. 1890-1918
Green Willow Park Washington	Local Park	1905-c. 1930s
Langston Golf Course Washington	Country club	1939-present
Madre's Park Washington	Local Park	c.1891-late 1910s
Suburban Gardens Amusement Park Washington	Amusement Park	1921-1940s

Florida

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
American Beach American Beach	Beach; Resort, ocean	1935-present
Bethune-Volusia Beach Volusia County	Resort, ocean	1944-present
Butler Beach-Anastasia Island St. Johns County	Beach	1927-present
Camp Doe Lake at Ocala National Forest (4-H Camp) Marion County	Campground	1949-1972
Florida Caverns State Park Marianna	State Park	1955-present
Fort Pickens State Park Pensacola Beach	State Park	1950s-1971
John C. Beasley State Park Okaloosa County	State Park	1954-present
John U. Lloyd Beach (now Von D. Mizell -Eula Johnson State Park) Broward County	Beach	1953-present
Lincoln Park Jacksonville	Amusement Park	1903-1910s

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Little Talbot Island State Park Jacksonville	State Park	1951-present
Magnolia Lake State Park Clay County	State Park	1957-1970s
Manhattan Beach Jacksonville	Beach	1900-1930s
Myakka River State Park Sarasota County	State Park	1950s-present
O'Leno State Park Columbia County	State Park	1941-present
Paradise Park at Silver Springs Silver Springs	Amusement Park	1949-1969
Roosevelt Park West Palm Beach	Local Park	1940s
Rosamond Johnson Beach at Perdido Key Perdido Key	Beach	1950-present
Three Rivers State Park Sneads	State Park	1960s-present
Tomoka State Park Ormond Beach	State Park	Mid-1950s-present
Virginia Key Beach (now Historic Virginia Key Beach Park) Dade County	Beach	1945-1982, 2008-present
Wilbur-by-the-Sea Volusia County	Beach	1930s-1930s
Wingate Beach Pensacola	Beach	1942-1979

Georgia

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Camp John Hope Fort Valley	Campground	1938-present
Fort Yargo State Park Winder	State Park	1954-present
George Washington Carver State Park Barstow County	State Park	1950-present
Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park Cordele	State Park	1952-present
King’s Wigwam Country Club Kennesaw	Country Club	1920s

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Lincoln Park Savannah	Amusement Park	1900s
Lincoln State Park Millen	State Park	1955-1975
St. Andrew Beach Jekyll Island	Beach	1955-present
Sulphur Springs Macon	Amusement Park	1920s-?
Tompkins Park and Swimming Pool Savannah	Local Park	1950s-1960s
Yam Grandy State Park (sometimes spelled Grande) Emanuel County	State Park	1956-1976
Keg Creek State Park Columbia County	State Park	1952-present

Illinois

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Booker T. Washington Pool Evanston	Local Park	1920s
Joyland Park Chicago	Amusement Park	1923-1925
Washington Park Chicago	Local Park	1870s-present

Indiana

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Fox Lake Angola	Resort, lake	1924-present

Kentucky

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Baxter Square Park Louisville	Local Park	1924-present
Bransford Summer Resort Edmonson County	Resort, rural	1921-1934
Charles Young Park and Community Center Lexington	Local Park	1930-present
Chickasaw Park Louisville	Local Park	1922-present

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Douglass Park Lexington	Local Park	1916-present
General Butler State Park Carrollton	State Park	1931-present
Park Club No. 1 Tyrone	Local Park	1911-c. 1920s
Stuart Nelson Paducah	Local Park	1938-present

Louisiana

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Brooks Park Baton Rouge	Local Park	1949-present
Chicot State Park Ville Plat	State Park	1950s-present
Crescent Star Park (now Hardin Playground) New Orleans	Local Park	1921-present
Dixie Park New Orleans	Local Park	1904-1914
Jesse Harrison (4-H Camps) Grant Parish	Campground	1950s-1972
Johnson Park New Orleans	Local Park	1902-1908
Lake Bistineau State Park Webster Parish	State Park	1956-present
Lincoln Beach New Orleans	Beach	1950-1964
Lincoln Park New Orleans	Local Park	1902-1930
Seabrook New Orleans	Beach	1928-1945
Shakespeare Park New Orleans	Local Park	1937-present
Thomy Lafon Playground New Orleans	Local Park	1906-1960s

Maine

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Armstrong Camp and Sportsmen's Club Litchfield	Resort, river	1920-1949

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Coley's Acres Saco	Resort, ocean	1950s
Rock Rest Kittery	Resort, ocean	1938-1976

Maryland

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Admirathoria Fort Washington	Amusement Park	1894-1916
Arundel-on-the-Bay Annapolis	Resort, bay	1949-present
Bay Highlands Anne Arundel County	Resort, bay	1925-present
Beechwood Park Pasadena	Resort, river	1943-1963
Brown's Grove Anne Arundel County	Amusement Park	Early 1900s-1938
Carr's Beach Anne Arundel County	Amusement Park	1926-1974
Cedar Haven Prince George's County	Resort, river	1927-present
Chesapeake Heights on the Bay Prince George's County	Beach	1960-1969
Columbia Beach—Shady Side Anne Arundel County	Beach	1940-present
Druid Hill Park Baltimore	Local Park	1860-present
Eagle Harbor Prince George's County	Resort, river	1925-present
Galesville Anne Arundel County	Amusement Park	1886-unknown
Golden Hotel Colton's Point	Resort, river	c. 1915-1974
Highland Beach Annapolis	Resort, bay	1893-present
Henry's Beach-Deal Island Dames Quarter	Resort, bay	1952-1982
Longview Beach St. Mary's County	Beach	1950s-present
Mill Point Shores St. Mary's County	Beach	1951-present
Notley Hall/Washington Park Prince George's County	Amusement Park	1894-1924

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Oyster Harbor Annapolis	Resort, bay	1947-present
Round Bay Severn	Resort	1890s-1910
Sandy Point State Park—Beach Park Anne Arundel County	Beach	1952-present
Scarlett's Country Club Westminster	Country Club	1948-1952
Sea Gull Beach Calvert County	Beach	1950s-1960s
Seafarer's Yacht Club Annapolis	Country Club	1957-present
Shadyside Shady Side	Resort, bay	1900s
Sparrow's Beach Annapolis	Resort, bay	1931-1974
Wilmer Park Brandywine	Local Park	1947-present

Massachusetts

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Camp Atwater North Brookfield	Campground	1921-present
Camp Twin Oaks Kingston	Campground	1934-1974
Oak Bluffs Martha's Vineyard	Resort, ocean	Early 1900s-present
The Roost Cape Cod	Resort, ocean	1950s
Wagon Wheel Cape Cod	Resort, ocean	1950s

Michigan

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Double J Ranch (also Pink Mansion) Constantine Township	Resort, ranch	1940s
Evergreen Resort South Haven	Resort, lake	1950s
Green Pastures Camp Jackson County	Campground	1931-1960s
Holy Family Resort Benton Harbor	Resort, lake	1962-unknown

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Idlewild Idlewild	Resort, lake	1912-present
Johnson's Shady Nook Farm South Haven	Resort, lake	1930s-1960s
Medicine Acres Rose Center	Resort, lake	1940-1955
Paradise Lake Cass County	Resort, lake	1920s
Pitchford's La Maison Covert	Resort, lake	1930s-1960s
Sugar Island Detroit	Amusement Park	1944-1948
Thornton's Resort South Haven	Resort, lake	1932-1940s
Val Du Lakes Farm Resort Oceana County	Resort, rural	1920s-present
West Michigan Resort Benton Harbor	Resort, lake	1908-1915
Woodland Park Resort Merrill Township	Resort, lake	1921-present

Minnesota

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Flagg's Lake Mary Resort Emily	Resort, lake	1961-1994
Lake Adney Crow Wing County	Resort, lake	1920s-present
Northern Lights Cook County	Resort, lake	1925/1926-1941

Mississippi

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Carver Point State Park Grenada County	State Park	1954-present
Gulfside Assembly Waveland	Resort, ocean	1923-present

Missouri

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Berry Land Wentzville	Amusement Park	1960-1974

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Blind Boone Hill Warrensburg	Local Park	1954-present
Doxey's Bath House Excelsior Springs	Resort, spa	1880s-unknown
Duncan's Point Lick Creek Cove	Resort	1953-unknown
Lake of the Ozarks State Park Kaiser	State Park	1930s-present
Lake Placid – Ozarks Stover	Resort, lake	1937-present
Lincoln Electric Park Kansas City	Amusement Park	1915-c. 1925
Star Bath House Excelsior Springs	Resort, spa	1880s-unknown
Watermelon Hill (now Swope Park Shelter #5) Kansas City	Local Park	1930s-present

New Jersey

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Barrett Beach Port Monmouth	Beach	1920s-unknown
Berean Seaside Home Near Asbury Park	Resort, ocean	1894-unknown
Chicken Bone Beach Atlantic City	Beach	1930-1964
Freeway Golf Course Sicklerville	Country Club	1967-2016
Morris Beach Egg Harbor Township	Beach	1938-present
Norris House Wildwood	Resort, ocean	1950s-1960s
Shady Rest Golf and Country Club Scotch Plains	Country Club	1921-1964
Sixth Street Ocean City	Beach	1940s-1960s

New York

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Camp Fern Rock Bear Mountain	Campground	1930s-1960s
Camp Gaylord White Arden	Campground	1917-1960s

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Camp Guilford Bower New Paltz	Campground	1928-1936
Camp Nathan Hale Southfields	Campground	1917-1960s
Cedar River House and Golf Club Indian Lake	Country Club	1947-1976
Clove Valley Dude Ranch High Falls	Resort, ranch	1950s-1960s
Crystal Lake Lodge Chestertown	Resort, lake	1950s-1970s
Dreamland Cottage Lake Placid	Resort, lake	1950s
Greenwood Forest Farms Warwick	Resort, rural	1919-present
Jus-Haven Greenwood Lake	Resort, lake	1950s
King's Lodge Otisville	Resort, lake	1937-2001
Lake Drew Lodge Holmes	Resort, lake	1950s-1960s
Luxton Lake (also known as Lucky Lakes) Narrowsburg	Resort, lake	1950s-1982
Mountain View Lodge Nyack	Resort, mountain	1960s
Paradise Farm Cuddebackville	Resort, rural	1950s-unknown
Peg Leg Bates Country Club Kerhonkson	Country Club	1951-1987
Rainbow Acres Kerhonkson	Resort, mountain	1960s
Rockaway Beach Queens	Beach	1925-present
Rucker Park, Harlem New York	Local Park	1950-present
Sag Harbor/Azurest/Ninevah/Sag Harbor Hills Sag Harbor	Resort, ocean	1939-present
Shinnecock Arms Quogue	Resort, ocean	1930s-1950s
White Horse Lodge West Brookville	Resort	1940s-1950s

North Carolina

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Bluff Park (now Doughton Park) Wilkes and Alleghany County	NPS	1940s-present
Camp J.W. Mitchell at Hammock's Beach (4-H Camp) Onslow County	Campground	1956-1965
Camp Oceanside Onslow County	Campground	1955-1985
Camp Whispering Pines (Umstead State Park) Wake County	Campground	1940-1966
Chowan Beach Hertford County	Beach	1926-2004
Fairview Park Charlotte	Local Park	1940s
Fourteenth Street Park Winston-Salem	Local Park	Unknown
Greenwreath Park Pitt County	Resort, river	1927-1929
Griffin's Beach Washington	Beach	1930s
Hammocks Beach Onslow County	Beach	1950-1964
Happy Hill Park Winston-Salem	Local Park	Unknown
Hillside Park Durham	Local Park	1922-present
John Chavis Memorial Park Raleigh	Local Park	1937-present
Jones Lake State Park Bladen County	State Park	1939-present
Kimberly Park Winston-Salem	Local Park	1940-present
Lyon Park Durham	Local Park	1964-present
Meadowbrook Country Club Garner	Country Club	1959-2007
Nocho Park Greensboro	Local Park	1937-present
North Topsail Beach North Topsail Beach	Beach	1949-present
Ocean City North Topsail Beach	Resort, ocean	1949-present

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Pearl Street Park Charlotte	Local Park	1943-present
Pearson Park Asheville	Local Park	1900s-unknown
Reedy Creek State Park (Umstead State Park) Wake County	State Park	1950-1966
Seabreeze/Freeman Beach New Hanover County	Resort, ocean; Beach	1920s-present
Shell Island Wrightsville Beach	Resort, ocean	1923-1926
Summerlane Camp Rosman	Campground	1963-unknown

Ohio

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Brush Lake Resort Champaign County	Resort, lake	1942-unknown
Camp Mueller Cuyahoga Falls	Campground	1939-present
Cedar Country Club Solon	Country Club	1940s
Clearview Golf Club East Canton	Country Club	1946-present

Oklahoma

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Elliott Park Muskogee	Local Park	1935-present
Lake Murray State Park Ardmore	State Park	1939-present
Platt National Park (now Chickasaw National Recreation Area) Sulphur	NPS	1906-1976
Roman Nose State Park Watonga	State Park	1937-present

Pennsylvania

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Anchor Inn Mount Pocono	Resort, mountain	1948-unknown

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Fairview Park Delmont	Amusement Park	1945-present
Hillside Inn Middle Smithfield Township	Resort	1955-2009

South Carolina

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Atlantic Beach Atlantic Beach	Resort, ocean	1934-present
Camp Dickson (4-H Camp) Columbia	Campground	1935-unknown
Campbell's Pond (now part of Cheraw State Park) Chesterfield County	State Park	1938-present
Hunting Island State Park Beach Beaufort County	State Park	1941-1966
Huntington Beach State Park Beaufort County	State Park	1962-present
Lake Greenwood State Park Greenwood County	State Park	1938-present
Magnolia Beach Club Pawleys Island	Resort, ocean	1934-1960s
Mill Creek Park Sumter County	State Park	1941-present
Mosquito Beach James Island	Beach	1940s-Late 1960s
Pleasant Ridge State Park Greenville County	State Park	1951-present
Riverside Beach Park Mount Pleasant	Beach	1930-1993

Tennessee

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Booker T. Washington State Park Chattanooga	State Park	1938-present
Camp Holloway (Girl Scout Camp) Millersville	Campground	1952-present
Coney Island Park Nashville	Amusement Park	1910-1912
Douglass Park Memphis	Local Park	1913-present

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Fred Douglass Park (now Frederick Douglass) Nashville	Local Park	1934-present
Greenwood Park Nashville	Amusement Park	1905-1949
Hadley Park Nashville	Local Park	1912-present
Klondyke Park Memphis	Local Park	1900s
Olympic Park Nashville	Local Park	1906-1907
Robert R. Church Park Memphis	Local Park	1899-present
Shelby County Negro State Park (now T.O. Fuller State Park) Memphis	State Park	1938-present

Texas

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Brown's Beach Galveston	Beach	1940s-1970s
Eighth Street Negro Park Dallas	Local Park	1938-present
Emancipation Park Houston	Local Park	1872-present
Exline Park Dallas	Local Park	1924-present
Finnigan Park Houston	Local Park	1939-present
Hall Street Negro Park (now Griggs Park) Dallas	Local Park	1915-present
North Hampton Park (now Mattie Nash/Myrtle Davis Park) Dallas	Local Park	1944-present
Oak Cliff Negro Park (now Eloise Lundy Park) Dallas	Local Park	1915-present
Rochester Park Dallas	Local Park	1945-present
South Dallas Negro Park (now Phillis Wheatley Park) Dallas	Local Park	1920-present

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Tyler State Park Tyler	State Park	1951-1963, 1975-present
Wahoo Park (now Juanita Craft Park) Dallas	Local Park	1924-present
Woodlake Country Club San Antonio	Country Club	1940s-unknown

Vermont

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Cole's Tourist Home Northfield	Resort, mountain	1940s-1950s

Virginia

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Bay Shore Beach and Resort Hampton	Resort, ocean; Amusement Park	1890-1973
Brook Field Park Richmond	Local Park	1940s-1960s
Camp Lichtman Prince William County	Campground	1936-1960s
Camp Pleasant Prince William County	Campground	1936-1950s
Camp Winonah Appomattox	Campground	1933-unknown
City Beach Norfolk	Beach	1935-1949
Collingwood Beach Fort Hunt	Resort, river	1888-1908
Durant Bayside Cottages Portsmouth	Resort, bay	1950s-1960s
Green Pasture Park Covington	Local Park	1940-2017
Happy Land Lake Lynchburg	Resort, lake	1930s-1950s
Holly Knoll Gloucester	Resort, river	1935-present
Hot Spring Bath County	Resort, spa	1899-1903
Jennie Dean Park Arlington	Local Park	1944-present
Lewis Mountain Rockingham County	Campground	1939-present

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Little Bay Beach Norfolk	Beach	1905-1928
Log Cabin Beach Williamsburg	Beach	1940s-1960s
Mark Haven Beach Tappahannock	Resort, river	1937-1970s
Montgomery Hall Park Staunton	Local Park	1946-present
National Memorial Park Beach James City County	Beach	1936-unknown
Ocean Breeze Beach and Amusement Park Virginia Beach	Amusement Park	1933-1954
Pinkett's Beach (now part of King-Lincoln Park) Newport News	Beach	1920s-present
Plantation Beach Dozier's Corner (now Chesapeake)	Beach	1931-unknown
Prince Edward State Park Prince Edward County	State Park	1950-present
Rockaway Beach Virginia Beach	Beach	1933-unknown
Seaview Beach Virginia Beach	Beach	1945-1964
Sunset Lake Park Deep Creek (now Chesapeake)	Local Park	1955-1960s
Tyler's Beach Rushmere	Beach	1940s-1980s
Western Branch Colored Beach Club Portsmouth	Beach	1934-unknown
Yellow Sulphur Springs Montgomery County	Resort, mountain	1926-1929

Washington

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Barrow's Landing Deer Lake Park, Stevens County	Resort, mountain	1910s

West Virginia

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Camp Washington-Carver (4-H Camp) Fayette County	Campground	1942-present

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Storer College Harpers Ferry	Resort, river	1867-1954

Wisconsin

Name	Property Type	Years of Operation
Chaney's Resort Spooner	Resort, lake	1960s
Goplana (Wisconsin Dells) Wisconsin Dells	Resort, lake	1960s
Lake Ivanhoe Walworth County	Resort, lake	1926-present
Somo Heights Resort Tomahawk	Resort, lake	1950s

Appendix B: Glossary of Landscape Typologies identified in the Theme Study

The Theme Study identifies seven primary African American recreation landscape typology categories that serve as a framework for the Glossary: amusement parks, beaches, campgrounds, country clubs, local parks/swimming pools, resorts, and state parks. Sub-categories, within each of the seven primary typology categories, are included, reflecting the rich variety of African American Outdoor recreation venues in the American landscape.[1]

Amusement Parks

Amusement:
"The pleasurable occupation of the attention, or diversion of the mind"

"Recreation, relaxation, the pleasurable action upon the mind of anything light and cheerful."

Amusement parks typically offered a variety of amusements and programs of entertainment including live music, dancing, contests and competitions, games, and rides. Supporting buildings and structures varied at the amusement parks but included open-air dance and music pavilions, riding devices, including merry-go-rounds, Ferris Wheels and thrill rides, bowling alleys, shooting galleries, dance and meeting halls, concession stands, restaurants, soda fountains. At larger amusement parks, the various amusements were often organized along a well-lit midway that served as a central public promenade. At waterside amusement parks, the midway was often along a boardwalk. Additional attractions included occasional fireworks displays.

The larger landscape of many amusement parks included a picnic ground that featured good, open lawns, shaded groves of trees seating, picnic benches, designated firepits, and containers for refuse. Playgrounds with swings, slides, and sandboxes, along with pony rides and miniature golf, were featured outdoor amenities at those amusement parks that advertised amusements for all ages. Those amusement parks that included beaches featured swimming, boating, and fishing among their outdoor recreation opportunities. Supporting buildings and structures for water recreation included a bathhouse, fishing piers, and docks.

As amusement parks developed, they extended their hours late into the evenings with dancing, music, and amusements along the well-lit midway providing featured evening entertainment. Overnight lodging opportunities developed at some amusement parks including hotel accommodations, individual cabins, and tourist homes. As automobile travel expanded in the twentieth century, auto trailer camps became standard contributing features near many amusement parks.

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[1] This glossary was developed from definitions articulated by various sources including organizations whose work focuses upon or intersects with outdoor recreation. The starting point for developing many of these definitions was The Oxford English Dictionary. Other sources included The Encyclopedia Britannica, Dictionary.com, and Scholarpedia.org, and the writings of John Brinckerhoff Jackson. Organizations included the Library of Congress, the United States Department of the Interior, the National Park Service, the National Park Foundation, the National Recreation and Park Association, the International Federation of Parks and Recreation Administration. The Texas Health and Safety Code: Licenses and Other Regulation, and the Louisville, Kentucky Department of Public Health and Wellness.

Beach

The shore of the sea, upon which the waves break, also applied to the shore of a lake or river

Sand beaches on the ocean shore, bays, lakes, and rivers offered daily seasonal recreation experiences including sunbathing, beachcombing, swimming, boating, fishing, crabbing, and birdwatching.

Ocean Beaches

The shore of the sea, upon which the waves break, particularly that part of the shore between the high- and low-water-mark but also the larger landscape in which to experience the complex natural systems in the tidal zone, salt marshes, coastal landforms including bluffs and beach dunes, dune vegetation, and coastal maritime forests that support a great diversity of plants and animals. Outdoor activities at the ocean beaches included swimming, sunbathing, fishing, crabbing, bird watching, and boating. Beach access is a landscape feature of note. The ocean beach was typically a public amenity, in theory open to all. However, African Americans' lack of access to ocean beaches during Jim Crow led to private development of African American ocean beach resorts along the adjacent dunes and uplands in the early 20th Century. The beach resorts offered daily and seasonal recreation experiences supported by various types of lodging, including hotels, beach rental cottages, restaurants, bath houses, concessions, outdoor pavilions, and recreational amusements such as music performances and evening dances. Some ocean beach resorts were developed as resort communities with platted lots and street layouts. The resort communities offered African Americans seasonal lodging and the opportunity for home ownership.

Lake, River, and Bay Beaches

Sand beaches on the shores of inland lakes, rivers and bays (indentations of the sea into the land with a wide opening) anchored the development of day excursion destinations for swimming, boating, and fishing and the development of more elaborate lake and river-front beach resorts with overnight, weekly, and seasonal lodging and more varied recreational pursuits and amusements. Supporting buildings and structures for recreation at lake, riverfront, and bay beach resorts included sand beaches, bath houses, fishing piers, outdoor pavilions, picnic grounds, concessions, hiking trails, sport fields, and recreational amusements such as music performances and evening dances. Some lake, riverfront, and bay resorts were developed as resort communities that offered African Americans seasonal lodging and the opportunity for home ownership.

Campground

Campground is an all-inclusive term for a variety of recreation settings, those varied camps and camping-grounds, primarily in rural settings, for individual and organized group activities, typically in the summer season. Campgrounds offered an escape from the city and an immersive experience in natural settings.

Camp

An institution or facility, esp. for children, providing recreational and sporting activities during the summer holidays.

Camps were developed as "private, social service-oriented recreation settings" for organized group use, primarily in the summer season, to enhance "the health, recreation, enjoyment, education and development" of boys and girls. The camps, typically located in rural areas, offered an escape from the city and were operated by youth-oriented social-service organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls. Recreational activities at the camps included fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, swimming, boating, hiking, and recreational sport and games. Landscape features at the camps included lakes, ponds, beaches, trails, baseball fields, basketball and tennis courts, programmed space for social gatherings, and supporting buildings and structures including lodges, recreation and dining halls, cottages, cabins, huts, and tents.

Camp could also refer to a site used as a base camp, a camp or resort used as a base from which a particular activity can be carried out, such as a Hunting Camp or Fishing Camp.

Campground (camp-ground) is also used to describe the site of a camp-meeting or a camping-ground with camp sites for the use of tents or recreational camping vehicles

Camp Meeting: a religious meeting held in the open air or in a tent (chiefly among Methodists in America), and usually lasting for some days, during which those who attend encamp on the spot.

Day Camp: a camp, particularly Youth Camp, that primarily operates only during a portion of the day

Youth Camp: a camp established for young people (children or minors) with facilities, maintained, or operated for recreational, educational, or vacation purposes

Country Club

A club, often with a restricted membership…and having facilities for recreation and social interaction. Also: the premises and grounds of such a club." Country Clubs can include facilities for a variety of sports but are most often associated with golf and golf courses. Country Clubs may include other developed features, such as a clubhouse, tennis courts, ballfields, swimming pools, concessions, and restaurants.

Golf Course

A landscape designed for playing the game of golf, where the course is organized with numbered holes and incorporates design features to challenge players' skill. Golf Courses typically have either 9 or 18 holes and the course topography may be natural or man-made and include features such as berms and graded areas. Golf courses have both natural and man-made features, including turf fairways, turf tees, contoured turf greens, roughs, sand bunkers, vegetated areas, wooded areas, wetlands, and water features which

serve as hazards along the course. Supporting buildings and structures include a clubhouse, a driving range, cart paths, concessions, maintenance and storage buildings, outdoor spaces for gathering socially, and parking. Golf courses may be public or private, but regardless of the status, require regular maintenance to keep the grounds playable.

Local Park/Swimming Pool

A Local Park is an area of land, a green space, in a city or town associated with a nearby neighborhood or community that is set aside for outdoor recreational activities for the enjoyment and benefit of the community. In their local park, community members can play, exercise, enjoy themselves, and gather to participate in community life. A local park's landscape features may support both active and passive recreational activities including recreational swimming.

Swimming Pool

"An artificial pool designed for swimming in."

Swimming pools may be a feature and destination in and of themselves or they may be part of a larger recreational experience, at a resort, country club, amusement park, or parks generally. Supporting buildings and structures include bath houses for men and women, splash pools for young children, a paved pool deck and turf areas for sunbathing, concession stands, security fencing, and parking.

Park: A large public garden or area of land used for recreation.

The definition and purpose of parks have evolved over time from the early definition of park as the enclosed grounds associated with a particular estate to an area of land set apart as public property for the outdoor recreational use, enjoyment, and benefit of the public, and the conservation of natural scenery and wildlife. Parks could be natural landscapes or designed compositions of "natural" scenery providing what J.B. Jackson identified as "contact with nature." Today, parks can take many forms and include a wide range of landscape and man-made features. Parks can be public or private and vary in scale from small neighborhood "pocket parks" to large national parks and regional park systems.

City Park
An area set aside by a town or city as a public park for the recreational use and enjoyment of the people and administered and managed by the town or city. Its landscape features may support both active and passive recreational activities. City Parks were identified by J. B. Jackson as socially disciplined by a code of public demeanor and landscapes where the common people, and particularly adolescents could exercise and play and enjoy themselves, and at the same time, participate in community life.

Urban Park
Urban parks are delineated open space areas that served as places of recreation, leisure, social gathering, civic engagement, and places of escape from the stresses generated in dense urban city centers, and those rapidly industrializing cities that attracted workers

during the Great Migration. Black southern migrants to northern cities turned to urban parks and green spaces to escape crowded housing and other ills of modern urban life. Generally reserved for public use, Urban Parks were associated with those social reforms introduced in the early twentieth century to improve the physical and moral welfare of the working class. Urban Parks are today viewed as essential to the quality of life in urban centers.

National Park
An area set aside by congress for the purpose of "conserving the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." By the Yellowstone Act of March 1, 1892, Congress established America's first national park, Yellowstone National Park in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming, "as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

Private Park
Owned, administered, and managed by a private individual, business, or non-governmental organization, a private park is an area set aside as a park for the recreational use and enjoyment of people, typically for a user fee.

Resort

A place much frequented or visited…for holidays, recreation, or because of a specific feature" including activities, such as relaxation, seasonal activities, including swimming, boating, hunting, fishing, hiking, and the emersion in nature. Resort attractions can include man-made features such as amusement and entertainment venues and natural features such as beaches, lakes, springs, woodlands, forests, mountains, prairies, deserts, caverns, and scenic vistas that define the resort experience

Resort Communities
Resort Communities offered longer term seasonal rental opportunities and in some cases home ownership opportunities for residents that fostered social bonds and community identity, as friends and families gathered each year at the resort communities or retirees transitioned to year-round resort living. Roads, trails, shared public spaces, recreation fields, business, entertainment, and residential districts, and social support organizations, along with essential public services developed at resort communities. Other names for Resort Community include Summer Community, Resort Town, Vacation Town, Summer Vacation Town, and Vacation Resort Communities.

Resort Complex
A holiday resort developed to offer a variety of recreation and leisure facilities at a single site often with rental accommodations for patrons. Resorts also feature businesses or services for vacationers and local residents including restaurants, tea rooms, grocery stores, post offices, music venues, clubs, concessions, and spaces for social gatherings.

Mountain Resort
A resort located in a mountainous area that can feature the clear mountain air mountain terrain, mountain scenery and vistas, mountain lakes and streams, natural waterfalls, woodlands and mountain vegetation, mountain meadows, wildlife, and recreation activities that take advantage of the mountainous terrain including hiking, climbing, fishing, horseback riding, skiing in the winter months, and hunting.

Ranch Resort
Ranch:
"A large farm or estate for breeding cattle, horses, or sheep, esp. in the western United States."

Ranch resorts, including Dude Ranches, are ranches operated as a holiday resort or tourist attraction and frequented by guests unused to ranching or to rural life in general. Landscape features found at ranch resorts include riding trails, pastures, forests, water features, and corrals, as well as contributing features such as ranch-houses, bunk-houses, barns, fencing, and miscellaneous support structures.

Spa
"A town, locality, or resort possessing a mineral spring or springs; a watering-place of this kind."

Spring
Mineral Springs and thermal bathing springs developed in the 18th and early 19th centuries as early American gathering places and resorts, healing landscapes where white elites could "take the waters" as part of restorative healing regimes that included the benefits of climate, air, and water; the first-hand experience of nature; and the dramatic natural scenery found in spring regions across the country. As changing medical practices brought about the decline of many early springs, African American spring resort destinations developed during the last two decades of the 19th Century and the early decades of the 20th Century. The springs offered African Americans social gathering places that featured the first-hand experience of nature and natural scenery in a resort setting. Contributing features at the springs included, springhouses, bathhouses, open-air pavilions, and a variety of rental lodgings, including hotels with dining facilities, cottages, cabins, and freestanding "rows" of guest rooms. Walking trails were a feature at many of the springs. In some locations, with concentrations of springs, African American spring resort communities developed. Spring and bath houses, roads, trails, shared public spaces, recreation fields, business, entertainment, and residential districts, and social support organizations, along with essential public services developed at spring resort communities.

Rural Resort
A resort featuring natural attractions in rural areas.

Picnic Grounds
Picnic Grounds developed in the late nineteenth century as gathering places for day-long group excursions, and outdoor recreation. The picnics were often sponsored by churches

and social and professional organizations on sites characterized by natural scenery, particularly open lawns, and groves of trees that provided much needed shade in the summer season. Common amenities at the picnic grounds included a safe and reliable water source, such as a spring or well, fire pits, picnic benches, and containers for refuse. Over time, some picnic grounds added playfields for team sports such as baseball. Picnic grounds were a common feature at more intensely developed outdoor recreation sites including amusement parks and beaches.

State Park

"State Parks are parks managed by the state in which it is located."

The first state park, Yosemite Park, California was established in 1864. In 1921, the inaugural National Conference on State Parks envisioned establishing the nationwide implementation of a system of "well-distributed state parks" "designed to provide scenic and recreational opportunities 'within easy access of all the citizens of every state and territory." State parks were created with greater flexibility and range in scenic quality, and allowing greater landscape modifications than at National Parks. The 1921 National Conference on State Parks identified the goal of situating a state park within a fifty-mile drive of all citizens." "A key justification for establishing systems of well-distributed state parks" was the "purported therapeutic value of direct contact with scenic landscapes and to "provide health-giving playgrounds for each and every man, woman, and child," a benchmark undermined by Jim Crow and segregation era policies particularly in the South where African American park users were presumed to require little more than a picnic area, a place to swim and fish, and perhaps a ball field." The early ideal for state parks focused on those special landscapes with existing natural features and high value scenic quality. Over time, however, those ideals were challenged by a growing emphasis on access and expanded recreation attractions. As William E. O'Brien has identified, by the 1950s the conflict over equal access to state parks had become a frontline for America's Civil Rights movement.

Among the attractions at state parks were beaches, lakes, including constructed lakes, ponds, caverns, scenic vistas and overlooks, and recreational facilities, including picnic grounds, campgrounds, playgrounds, tennis courts, baseball fields, horseshoe pits, and golf courses. Supporting buildings and structures included entrance signs, piers, bath houses, rest rooms, picnic shelters, concession stands, restaurants, lodges, cabins, campgrounds, parking areas, and those roads and trails that provided access to the parks' scenery.

Additional Definitions:

Recreation

An activity or pastime which is pursued for the pleasure or interest it provides.

Or the action or fact of refreshing or entertaining oneself through a pleasurable or interesting pastime, amusement, activity, etc. (esp. habitually); amusement, entertainment.

Destination:

Short for place of destination, a particular place or a place defined or well known for a particular recreation activity such as swimming, hunting, fishing, hiking, boating, bird watching, amusement, entertainment, or historical event.

Retreat

A place providing privacy or seclusion for the purposes of prayer, study, or meditation, or for rest and relaxation also a place providing shelter or security; a refuge.

Playground:

Definition of Play:
"To engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose" (National Recreation and Park Association).

Two usages of playground were common in the period of this study. In the Nineteenth Century, playground was used as a descriptive for those grounds used for baseball, tennis and other competitive sports. In the 1880s, an interest in safe play areas for children stimulated the growth of a playground movement in the United States and, by the 1890s, "playgrounds" could also include what were, in effect, outdoor kindergartens on the grounds of Settlement Houses, social services centers in many American cities. In 1906, the newly-formed Playground Association of America (PAA) recognized that "playgrounds," including sandboxes for toddlers and play equipment such as swings, seesaws, and slides for older children, as well as athletic fields, were "a necessity for all children as much as schools." Play, under proper conditions, was deemed essential to the health and the physical, social and moral well-being of children.

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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Chicken Bone Beach, 1956. Atlantic City, New Jersey. Photographed by John W. Mosley. Courtesy of the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries

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