STEEL INDUSTRY HERITAGE CORPORATION

ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY 1993

FINAL REPORT

HOMEWOOD, POINT BREEZE, EAST LIBERTY AND HIGHLAND PARK

Jean E. Snyder

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I. Introduction and Fieldwork Plan

In their history and in their present populations the neighborhoods surveyed in this project reflect

Pittsburgh's social, economic and ethnic diversity. Homewood, Point Breeze, East Liberty and Highland Park boast a vibrant, almost mythical past of economic vitality--even abundance--now recalled with nostalgia by residents and former residents. The shifting patterns of ethnic populations in these neighborhoods reflect the currents created by the rise and fall of the steel industry in Western Pennsylvania. In some cases, because residents worked directly in the mills or related industries; other groups were affected less directly, but through their involvement in local and state government, industrial and mercantile construction, and the development of Pittsburgh's transportation infrastructure.

While some groups have preserved their distinctive ethnic cultural traditions, others see themselves as generic Americans or Pittsburghers (though acknowledging diverse roots), and speak more readily in terms of neighborhood or block identity, or of values related to social, educational and economic status. Still others are finding new artistic and cultural expressions of ethnic identity, transforming visual, aural and communal images and practices to fit the opportunities and demands of their lives in the late twentieth century.

A predominant characteristic of most areas in the four neighborhoods in this survey is the shift from a largely white or mixed population to predominantly black. Several neighborhoods have changed from white to mixed populations. In the case of North Point Breeze, the mixture is racial, as well as one of middle and upper-middle class residents; in East Liberty and parts of Highland Park, there is a racially integrated mix of middle and lower-middle class residents. Homewood has shifted from a mixed to a predominantly black population of mixed economic status, as have parts of East Liberty and Highland Park. In the latter cases, public perception exaggerates the proportion of change and tends to attribute negative effects to the changes, which residents argue are unjustified. South Point Breeze has retained a predominantly Euro-American population, though the economic status of the residents is more diverse than might have been the case in former years.

In approaching this project, I have been fortunate to be able to draw on the assistance of friends and acquaintances within these communities, both as interviewees and as sources of suggestions for

contact persons and for strategy. Many persons in African-American communities have had cause to resent the intrusion of white researchers who have come and gone, leaving little behind but a sense of exploitation, and a frustration that the fieldworkers do not understand or share the community values. Often community members feel that the emphasis in presentation of research data highlights the negative or dysfunctional aspects of African-American life, or objectifies cultural traditions as primitive, quaint or sensational. Where are the black fieldworkers? Why is the survey not conducted by those who share and understand these traditions as inheritors or participants, and why should white fieldworkers be paid to gather information which belongs to the black community? What will the community gain from this project? And how can the community guarantee responsible use of the materials that are gathered?

These and other important questions, whether spoken, implied or unexpressed, have shaped my approach to this survey. Sometimes I have prefaced an interview by acknowledging that I might not be the best person to conduct such a survey, and that I see my role to be exploratory. I have solicited suggestions of qualified persons from the community whose services might be engaged to implement a more comprehensive, in-depth survey, and have asked how such a project might best be designed.

I have met with remarkable openness and in some cases expressions of gratitude for the opportunity to talk about personal experiences and reflect on significant cultural traditions. In some cases contributors have indicated that they wish persons within the community were as interested as I in their heritage. At the same time, I have heard serious concerns raised about how my material will be used, what images and perceptions my presentation (and future publications by Steel Industry Heritage Corporation) will highlight, and how African Americans will be involved in later stages of the project.

I began interviewing persons who reside in or who grew up in the Homewood-Brushton area, including two persons with ties to the Belmar Gardens cooperative on the hill above Homewood. The next highest concentration of interviews focused on North Point Breeze, and explored the connections in that neighborhood with the area north of the railway tracks, usually regarded as Homewood proper. A sampling of interviews in East Liberty provides a glimpse of trends and perceptions in that area. One

interview in South Point Breeze provided a sense of that community and suggestions for further exploration. Though it was not possible to interview anyone in Highland Park during the time period allotted for this project, several suggestions for persons to interview are included.

The extensive report on Homewood reflects the greater concentration of interviews in this area, but it also reflects the importance of connections between Homewood and the other areas covered by this survey. And while in some ways the currents in Homewood's history may be more dramatic, similar processes and trends are evident in the other neighborhoods, so less detail is needed in the overview of those areas at this preliminary stage.

II. NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

Homewood-Brushton

The history of Homewood is epitomized by the contrasts one sees in the course of a half-hour walking tour along the length of Homewood Avenue, as described by Sandra Gould Ford in a Pittsburgh Press Sunday News Magazine feature, "Blue Blood, White Flight, and Black Hope," 2 November 1986. Homewood, named for the country estate which Judge William Wilkins built in the early 1800s south of Penn Avenue (then Greensburg Pike) between what are now Dallas and Murtland Avenues, originally encompassed the area now known as Point Breeze as well as that stretching north of the railway tracks.

Shifting Settlement Patterns

In the years shortly before the Civil War a number of Pittsburgh's prominent industrialists fled the rising pollution that accompanied their enterprises to establish spacious estates in the outlying rural areas. One of the most attractive areas was Homewood. The new Pennsylvania Railroad provided supplemental transportation, and the hunting, fishing, horseback riding and picnicking provided recreation for the elite social circle which settled among the rolling hills. Homewood drew families with

names such as Carnegie, Frick, Heinz, Lang, Kelly and Westinghouse. The lavish estates south of the railway tracks enabled wealthy and socially prominent families (the Allegheny Blue Book listed 77 in 1887 and 163 in 1925) to satisfy "most of their needs and desires . . . without ever leaving the grounds." They shared a common Protestant Yankee, British or Germanic heritage, a confidence in their superiority over the less fortunate, and a sense of paternalistic responsibility for their "poorer brethren" (Sapolsky 1987, 4-5). (Note: Much of the material in this section is summarized from Sapolsky's study and from conversation with him, supplemented with details from Gould, a 1938 study by the Bureau of Social Research, and other clippings from the SIHC files.)

Some of the earliest homes just to the north and south of the railway tracks were owned by African-Americans, who found employment as servants in the wealthy estates to be among the best jobs available to them. The legendary comfort and elegance which characterized the lives of the Carnegies, the Heinzes, and the Westinghouses could be achieved only with the support of a large and accomplished staff, who worked to ensure the immaculate precision, beauty and efficiency in every detail of their employers' lives. While some of these servants lived in small quarters on the estates, many others settled in the area around Finance, Tioga and Susquehanna streets. Though far less is known of their lives than of their white employers and neighbors, this community of skilled African-American workers contributed to the stability and economic strength of Homewood from its beginning (Sapolsky 1987, 7-8). A number of their descendants still reside in Homewood today, and are lifelong members of the Homewood A.M.E. Zion congregation.

Homewood was annexed to the city of Pittsburgh in 1867, as was Brushton, the eastern part of this area, a few years later. In the mid-1870s, when the bank took over a large parcel of land, the first of several groups of allotments became available to families in the new middle class, whose work supported the manufacturing industries. When four electric trolley lines were built in 1892 and 1893, Homewood became a thriving suburb. Developers lined the streets with rows of substantial brick and stone houses, clustered along the railroad and street car lines, along Penn, Hamilton, Frankstown and

Lincoln avenues. The neighborhood's reputation as "the choicest residence locality in the greater Pittsburgh area" drew thousands of families, bringing the population of Homewood-Brushton to 30,000 by 1910.

Among the newer settlers were blue-collar workers and small businessmen who served the local community; their cultural values paralleled those of the neighbors they joined. Homewood Avenue developed into one of the largest shopping districts in the city, and religious and social institutions flourished, creating a strong sense of cohesiveness and well-being. Other light industries joined the brickyards, clay-pot and white-lead factories that had located in Homewood in the 1870s. Predominant among them were the large car barns built by the Pennsylvania Railroad company along Frankstown Avenue to service their rolling stock. These facilities were later used for repair and storage of buses and trolleys.

In the period from 1910 to 1960, as earlier residents of Homewood eventually moved farther out of the city, some of the large estates were subdivided and some of the row houses were purchased by newcomers. The new residents brought a diversity which Homewood residents found disturbing. In 1911 Robert Vann, publisher of the widely read black newspaper, the Pittsburgh Courier, purchased a house on Monticello. Though his aspirations were similar and his educational level probably greater than that of his neighbors, some objected to his presence. Six years later, when a second African American family moved to the adjoining house, the "Battle of Monticello Street" (as the Vann family termed it) resulted in the flight of a number of white families to areas such as Wilkinsburg and Mount Lebanon. Monticello Street became the nucleus of a socially elite African-American enclave in Homewood, many of whose residents attended the Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross, then located on Center Avenue in the Hill District.

Working-class families, such as the Italian, Irish, and German immigrants, many of whom were Roman Catholics with them unfamiliar cultural practices, faced similar opposition. These larger, less-prosperous families were also escaping the pollution and noise of the inner city, and pursuing their own

American Dream. With their coming, Homewood became a "little League of Nations." While the area south of the railway (today's Point Breeze) remained white and upper and middle class, that north of the tracks "became a mosaic of different classes, ethnic and racial groups" (Sapolsky 1987, 18). Some blocks could be identified as all African-American, all Italian, or all white Protestant middle class. Others included a mixture of African-American, Italian, German, and Irish families. Monticello, Race and Idlewild streets in the Belmar section, remained middle class, with a mixture of African-American and Euro-American families. Some areas just north of the tracks deteriorated. Most families owned their homes, but many rented space to others, in order to supplement income or accommodate relatives.

The ethnic and economic diversity of the residents also changed the environmental and social landscape. Gardens, grape arbors, fruit trees and poultry runs reflected the need for families to grow food. The look-alike facades gave way to individualized renovations, as Italians skilled in masonry and grillwork added extensions and decorations. Churches and social and cultural institutions provided support networks for these working-class families, and affirmed and transmitted their distinctive ethnic traditions. Churches such as Holy Rosary Catholic Church, dedicated on Saint Patrick's Day in 1928 to serve the Irish community; the all-Italian Mother of Good Counsel Catholic Church; and small storefront African-American churches began to replace the Protestant congregations, helping to transform Homewood "into a patchwork community held together by ethnic churches" (Sapolsky 1987, 23).

For African-Americans and for others, a move to Homewood was a milestone of economic and social accomplishment. For the most part, these people of diverse national and racial heritage co-existed, sometimes in harmony and cooperation, in other instances, at least in a tolerance which preserved social boundaries. As African Americans were among the earliest residents, or had migrated to Homewood alongside the immigrant settlers, Euro-American newcomers did not question their prior or equal claim. Homewood's African-American residents tended to be better educated and more

affluent than the majority of the newcomers. Another factor was that Italians, the largest immigrant group, had experienced discrimination as well. Public facilities such as the Homewood pool were always integrated, and sports teams at Westinghouse High School included African-Americans, though in numbers which reflected their relatively small proportion of Homewood's population. Racial and ethnic tensions surfaced from time to time. The Ku Klux Klan, which operated openly in neighboring Wilkinsburg, made public threats against Blacks and Catholics on marches through Homewood, but the community rejected such open displays of intolerance.

Many factors converged in the 1950s to rupture the fragile harmony of this diverse community. In 1950 the Black population of Homewood numbered about 25%; by 1960 it had increased to more than 70%, a trend which has continued, bringing it to nearly 98% in 1990. The outside pressures and the attraction which brought large numbers of working-class African-Americans to Homewood coincided with opportunities and enticements which spurred the flight of white residents to the suburbs. Racial polarization devastated the community. As Euro-American families abandoned north Homewood, their counterparts south of the railroad line cut their ties symbolically by renaming their neighborhood Point Breeze, and by reorienting their shopping, church and recreation patterns away from Homewood. Though they did not move away en masse, the upper-middle class Euro-American Point Breeze residents came to see the railroad embankment as being both a psychological and a physical barrier. African Americans who ventured south of the railway were regarded as intruders. Any who walked the streets of Point Breeze could anticipate harrassment or arrest, and Westinghouse Park was off-limits as a recreation area.

Pittsburgh's industrial growth during World War II drew many African-Americans from the South in the early 1950s. Most of the new housing in the suburbs was closed to them, and the Hill District could not absorb all of the influx. When government agencies claimed the Lower Hill, using the power of eminent domain to build the Civic Arena and other urban renewal projects, the housing crisis on the Upper Hill grew to explosive proportions. Homewood, one of the few neighborhoods open to

African-American homeseekers, offered an attractive alternative. As racial proportions shifted, so did the socio-economic mix in Homewood. Few of the African Americans moving in were able to purchase houses, so many one-family houses became multi-unit rental properties.

As apprehensions about the changing character of Homewood intensified, many of the younger Euro-American families were looking for newer, more spacious homes, which post-war prosperity gave them the means to secure. Federal government policies and subsidies made relocating to a new house in the suburbs easier and cheaper than renovating an old one in the inner city. Real estate agents accelerated the change "by urging Whites to sell their homes at less than value because of neighborhood changes. These homes were then sold at higher prices to Blacks. Everyone blamed everyone else for these developments while the real estate operators profited" (Sapolsky 1987, 32).

Other factors, such as the closing of the Holy Rosary high school for girls, contributed to the exit of Irish families from the area. As Homewood had been the home of several ethnic groups, none of which predominated, no one group felt a loyalty to maintain their place as the neighborhood changed.

The 1960s brought also changes within Homewood's African-American community. Though the shopping district and light industries in Homewood had begun to decline earlier, the riots in response to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King brought devastation from which the community has still not fully recovered. With the building of the East Hills shopping mall, the last remainders of Homewood Avenue's once-thriving retail center atrophied. Paradoxically, as other housing areas in the suburbs, North Point Breeze and other city neighborhoods opened up to middle-class African Americans following the civil rights gains in the 1960s, they, too, moved "up and out," no longer viewing Homewood as "the choicest residence locality." As the tax base eroded, services to the community declined. Homewood's image as a thriving, diverse mini-city where residents could realize their dreams, faded into memory.

Many families who remain, however, refuse to surrender their loyalty to the Homewood they remember and intend to rebuild. Undeterred by public perceptions, community apathy, governmental

indifference--or even by the violence which threatens to decimate their youth--they work through church and community agencies to restore hope, strengthen communal identity and create expanded opportunities for themselves and their neighbors. Scattered among them are a few white families who also continue to affirm Homewood as their neighborhood, the right place to be.

Images of the Past

All of the persons I interviewed about Homewood were African Americans. Those who described the Homewood they remember as they were growing up spoke with relish and nostalgia of this diverse community. They lived on streets with Italian, Irish and German neighbors, and one could be certain that if anyone's children misbehaved, their parents would know. People shared the produce they grew in their gardens, and if they didn't socialize together or children sometimes hurled racial epithets, for the most part residents took considerable satisfaction from the degree of cooperation and calm that made Homewood seem a model neighborhood.

Many of the African-American men in Homewood worked in the jobs in the steel mills that were allotted to them or were employed as maintenance workers at Westinghouse. Others found jobs in the light industries that developed along Frankstown and Hamilton Avenues. The clangor and grime of work in the pits and on the pulleys of the railway car barns along Frankstown fascinated young boys. John Brewer remembers dashing through the car barns, on a dare, on his way to school. The middle-class African-American residents of Homewood made great sacrifices to secure education for their children. The young men from blue-collar working families, who had arrived later, learned that if they didn't enjoy school or do well enough to go on to college, they could always find a job, and they knew where to look. Jesse Bolden's students in the vocational department at Westinghouse High School could not always be convinced to try to go to Tuskegee or Hampton University or the University of Pittsburgh. They knew their fathers made more than their teacher, with less education!

Dr. Leon Haley remembers Homewood as an ideal place to grow up. The schools were good.

One could shop on Homewood Avenue for a wide variety of goods and services. Peggy Pierce Freeman remembers it as the place one went on a Saturday afternoon, dressed up in one's best (complete with hat and gloves), to meet friends. While the shop owners were mostly white, black customers and white appreciated the easy access to the good butcher shop, grocery stores, hardware and variety stores.

One could go to the theater on a date; Peggy Freeman did not recall any instance of discrimination there, but Dorothy C. Reed described the division between seats on one side for whites, and on the other for black viewers. She and her husband and another couple refused to move one afternoon when they simply decided to sit where they wanted to.

A cluster of Homewood streets was known as "your very exclusive black neighborhood": Monticello (the home of the Robert Vanns), Idlewild, Race, Mt. Vernon, Upland, and Hermitage. If one listed an address on one of these streets, "everyone knew" that the family's social and educational (and to some extent economic) status was refined. While one's job might not be regarded in the white world as prestigious, everyone in the African-American community understood that discrimination often kept well-qualified people from full employment of their capabilities. Education and cultural values--and, to be honest, one's color--were regarded as more indicative of one's place in society. However, these streets housed people who could afford the solidly built row houses, and who took pride in maintaining their homes and a lifestyle that reflected their accomplishment. Everyone knew "that's where the parties were, and their kids had gone to college, and they had cars." People who lived on these streets had friends in Beltshoover and Schenley Heights, which were also socially exclusive areas in the black community. The heads of these households were journalists (with the Pittsburgh Courier), funeral directors, teachers, lawyers, ministers, and businessmen.

Much of the social life and cultural activity centered in the church. Literary and social clubs, church and community events tended to overlap. Sunday afternoon "teas" might be held in a church parlor or in a home. Hostesses served tea--hot or iced, as the season demanded--beautiful cookies,

mints, and peanuts. The program featured a speaker and some musical selections. Teas served to raise funds to "perpetuate the purpose" of the club, often to raise scholarship support for young people, or to fund a community project. Participants made a donation, perhaps fifty cents or a dollar.

Teas served an educational and artistic function as well. They were an important venue for African-American vocal and instrumental soloists to be heard. Accompanists and singers might travel to three or four places on a Sunday afternoon to perform. Art songs, parlor songs and concert versions of spirituals formed the vocal repertoire. Some of the early gospel songs (now referred to by African-American art musicians as "traditional") might be performed "with nuance."

Recreation in the community included a dance hall for teenagers on Hamilton Avenue. In the 1940s and 1950s black bands appeared there. And on Friday nights, enterprising folks in Homewood or the Hill who needed to hustle to pay the rent might host a Friday Night Ten-Cent Social. "All you had to pay" was the ten-cent cover charge to enjoy the fun, but chicken, potato salad and other delicacies could be bought for a reasonable fee.

Churches offered spiritual nourishment, functioned as a moral force, strengthened one's sense of personal identity and purpose, and often provided social services not available elsewhere. Church choirs, quartets and other ensembles performed for regular services, but also gave concerts in church sanctuaries on weekend evenings, and entertained at social functions.

Community choirs such as the Treble Clef Club, Raymond Walls' Intercultural Choir and the Cardwell Dawson Choir drew their membership from various congregations and neighborhoods, but much of their repertoire was religious. They performed sacred classical choruses, cantatas, oratorios, anthems, and choral arrangements of spirituals. The Pittsburgh chapter of the National Association for Negro Musicians (NANM) supported vocal and instrumental performers and a strong affiliation with the national organization. While the Treble Clef Club, a women's choir directed by Maudelena Johnson, and the Walls' Intercultural Choir rehearsed on the Hill, the National Negro Opera Company, founded in 1941 by Mary Cardwell Dawson, rehearsed in the mansion on Apple Street on the hill above

Homewood, owned by Woogie Harris. Music studios offered classical vocal and instrumental instruction in various locations.

Social and church ties often radiated beyond the Homewood locale. Many Homewood residents had migrated from the Hill and might retain membership in a congregation there, or have relatives and friends who had moved on to Beltshoover or Verona. While neighborhood identity was strong, the stronger identity was and probably still is to one's particular stratum of the African-American community. One's choice of congregation--or the congregation in which one was welcomed--reflected one's preference in styles of religious expression, but also had strong social class associations, defined by education, personal accomplishment and color. In Homewood, another factor was the period of one's arrival in the community and one's point of origin.

Masonic orders, fraternities and sororities, and relationships among alumni of black colleges provided important social networks. The Women's Auxiliary of WEMCO, the social club for black Westinghouse workers located on Frankstown Avenue, offered cultural programs in addition to raising funds for the society. The Loendi Club, the most exclusive social club for African-American men in Pittsburgh, was located on Fullerton Street on the Hill, but Homewood residents who met the criteria were invited to join. The Aurora Reading Club was one of several literary and social clubs in which women were active. In addition to teas, poetry readings and literary discussions, they sponsored fashion and millinery shows.

Homewood's African-American residents found various means of supplementing the family income. In addition to raising produce and poultry in the garden, some women established cottage industries as seamstresses or milliners, as well as doing domestic work outside the community. Many of the men owned pickup trucks or vans from which they conducted small businesses as independent craftsmen, such as plumbers or carpenters. Dr. Leon Haley observed that many of these skilled workmen came from the South, where such crafts were passed down. African-Americans had been expected to perform skilled labor during slavery, and the tradition continued generally, strongly

reinforced by the vocational training in black schools and colleges. As electrician Jesse Bolden found, few native black Pittsburghers had the opportunity to develop such skills, as the labor unions persistently excluded African-American workers.

The full history of "the numbers" (illegal betting) in Pittsburgh, which generated substantial capital resources, and the way the leaders of that underground economy employed that capital to support significant community enterprises**,** remains to be told. For example, much of the support for the black athletic leagues came from this source, and Woogie Harris provided space in his home on Apple Avenue for the Mary Cardwell Dawson music studio as well as rehearsal space for the National Negro Opera Company. Harris and his partners also had a hand in the nurturing of jazz musicians in Pittsburgh.

Several interviewees spoke of the changes that the successive waves of migration into Homewood brought. While families opened their homes to newcomers from the South, sometimes renting a bed both day and night to workers on different shifts, the community could not absorb such overwhelming numbers on a permanent basis. In addition to the pressure of numbers, the incoming residents tended to have fewer educational advantages, different cultural and social expectations than the earlier residents, and different standards of home maintenance. Nearly one-third of the single-family houses in Homewood were converted to two and three-family apartments during the 1930s and 1940s. Those who rented often had little control over home maintenance, and landlords who subdivided houses tended to economize by not adding plumbing facilities to the small rental units they created.

Church programs and community agencies have been formed and transformed to address the mounting problems through the past several decades. Though hopes for renewal have often been thwarted as businesses, plans and projects have come and gone, Homewood is still regarded as a significant center of African-American experience in Pittsburgh. The strength of the African-American community which helped to give Homewood its historic luster is still evident in the varied efforts which continue to meet the complex challenges of the present and to ensure a future of hope and opportunity

for its current residents, young and old.

Perspectives on the Present

Much of the discussion of the situation in Homewood today is tinged with anguish over the physical, economic and social devastation of a community which once represented hope. The human tragedy associated with the loss of an economic base that nurtures a stable community is inescapable. Too many young people see no hope for a job that provides a living wage, and they know that education is no guarantee of economic success. While the perception that all or most of Homewood's young people turn to gangs and street violence is regarded as arising from ignorance and prejudice, contributors spoke with intense concern of the increasing sense of despair and hopelessness that blights many young lives.

Today's predominant underground economy, the illegal drug trade, while it may be controlled to some extent from outside the community, offers vastly greater access to money and material possessions than the few minimum-wage jobs which young people see around them. Many of the young people who are active in the drug business have adopted the wider society's measure of personal worth, and scorn the "dressed-for-success" people they see on the streets, who may make in a year what they can carry in their wallets from a few days' dealings. Some of their lives, as Nelson Harrison describes them, are narrowly circumscribed; they may seldom venture more than a few blocks in any direction, and the world in which they move offers few models for alternative ways to live. The concept of planning for some unimaginable future career is ludicrous; many do not expect to live to be twenty years old. Though some now have children whom they do not wish to see grow up on such dangerous streets, the escalating cycles of hostility and revenge offer little relief. And the sense of responsibility which funneled profits from earlier underground economies back into the community is not apparent in this generation.

Interviewees who reflected on this situation offered insightful and compelling observations. They pointed out that, while the fratricidal violence and xenophobic belligerence of the street gangs are

alarmingly real, an equally important problem is that public perceptions and the media focus on these issues virtually to the exclusion of all that is creative and courageous in the Homewood community.

John and Tina Brewer, proprietors of Ramseys II Lounge on Frankstown Avenue, interact daily with the young men whose territories adjoin their restaurant and the Coliseum (the last of the old car barns), which is now being renovated. John says, "We've always had gangs; I was always in a gang growing up--in college we called them fraternities." Gangs are nothing new. He observed that, while we may object to their values and the activities, it is important to recognize the validity of these young people's need to form their own social organizations, to try to protect themselves from the dangerous world in which they find themselves. Tina points out that for the most part, adults are not in danger unless they stumble into the crossfire; gang members' conflicts are with each other, and they are primarily a danger to themselves and others of their age group.

The Brewers firmly reject any characterization of themselves as noble or unusual; they are a part of the community with these young people. They know that words, advice or instructions to them are futile; young people need to see models for other ways of living. In their management of the Coliseum skating rink and social hall and the Ramseys II lounge, the Brewers have provided employment and committed, personal mentoring to a significant number of young people from the community. One of their employees has just gone off to college; they supported him through the difficult process of disengaging from his street life. They know how dangerous his choice could be (he took a taxi or a jitney to work rather than walking or riding the bus or a bike), and how closely his former companions are watching him, testing his resolve.

For others not yet ready to step away from those relation-ships, John offers a challenge: "You are supposed to be protecting your territory; your territory is this community; you aren't doing a very good job of it. We are a part of this community; we should be able to count on your help to make this a safe place." He also lets them know that anyone who wants to make a change can count on his and Tina's support: no handouts, but a job and a chance to work to make the community a better place.

Meanwhile, if the young people want to come in to Ramseys II, they are welcome, but they must dress and behave appropriately, be gentlemen. Mingling with the guests who come to socialize in this simply decorated, attractive lounge, they glimpse another world. They see how other people interact and how they dress on a social occasion. Perhaps they hear some good jazz. And on the walls they see fine paintings, fiber art pieces, sculpture and photographs by African-American artists. Perhaps they take back to the street new images, of a possible future, a potential self they could not have imagined before.

In the year and a half since they opened Ramseys II, the Brewers have had no incidents of violence or of brawling, and none of the valuable art works in any medium that they have displayed has been stolen. Some of the young people who work for them spend a good part of their time off hanging around, because the Lounge is a good place to be.

The Coliseum, which featured the largest wooden skating floor in the country, is now being renovated. The Brewers envision it as one of the best things to happen in Homewood in a long time. Before the renovation, they had restored the Coliseum to the community as a social hall, a place for clubs and organizations of all kinds to hold meetings, bingo games, dances, proms, wedding receptions, family gatherings. The remodeled Coliseum will be a multipurpose cultural arts center, with facilities for conventions and public performances, in addition to providing more attractive facilities for the events for which the community has come to rely on it. And it will provide employment for even more of Homewood's residents.

What is it like to run a business in Homewood? The Brewers have had far less experience than the proprietors of some of the other black-owned businesses along Frankstown Avenue: Trowers' Cleaners, Gaithers' Flowers, Dorsey's Record Shop. Some of these establishments have served the community for more than thirty years, and they succeeded without financial support from the banks or the Better Business Bureau. They provide friendly, dependable service, and they are committed to the community.

Tina Brewer says people like themselves who are trying to establish newer businesses tend to be short-staffed and overworked; they don't have time to network or participate actively in support organizations for businesses. There are seminars, but she was frustrated to find that the one she wanted to go to within the past year was too expensive. The business people who could afford to go have survived the difficult beginnings; those who need the help to sustain them can't take advantage of such assistance.

Remarkable changes have taken place along Homewood Avenue within the past year, some within recent months. A double row of new townhouses lines the street between the busway and Hamilton Avenue (another group lies along Lang), the facades of a number of stores have been refurbished, and a new Rite-Aid drug store has opened. These changes result from years of determined effort on the part of several community organizations such as the Homewood Brushton Community Improvement Association and the Homewood Brushton Revitalization and Redevelopment Corporation.

These are hopeful signs, but interviewees were cautious in their optimism. If Homewood's economic base is not restored, such changes will prove to be cosmetic rather than substantial. They have seen new facades before, and the number of business establishments that have flourished and disappeared within months or weeks is legion. Those who have purchased the townhouses represent a pool of enterprising young families. To qualify for the housing subsidies they have had to present evidence of regular employment and a satisfactory credit rating. They tend to be young couples with one or two children, some white-collar, some blue-collar workers. Some may have chosen to return to Homewood to raise their families in a black community; others have grown up here. But these upwardly mobile young people may not realize that their future in Homewood depends to some extent on their patronizing Homewood businesses. Will they shop at the Rite-Aid down the street, or will they go to the one on Penn Avenue? Will they eat Kentucky Fried Chicken on Frankstown Avenue, or will they go to Monroeville to eat out?

Marjory Franklin pointed out that a substantial force of highly skilled, well-educated professional workers leave Homewood on the busway every morning. They fill responsible positions in offices in Oakland and in downtown Pittsburgh. But where do they shop? Does their income feed the Homewood economy? Or do they shop downtown, in Squirrel Hill, in Oakland or at suburban shopping malls? Like the rest of us, they are likely to shop where they find a wide variety of goods of the highest quality they can (or decide to) afford. If they do not find Homewood's few stores to meet those criteria, they may not shop there out of loyalty to the community. However, more and more voices are calling African Americans to support black businesses, and Homewood's civic leaders are among them (Donalson 1984, A2).

An interesting question has been people's perception of where the boundary of Homewood and Point Breeze falls. Many people assume that the railway line is both the physical and psychological boundary, and in many ways that is true. This perception is reinforced by signs leading into or away from Homewood, which from time to time have been affixed to one side or the other of the railway underpass on streets such as Lang and Homewood avenues. However, some people living north of the tracks have for many years considered themselves part of the Point Breeze neighborhood.

Commercial interests in some cases affect the invisible boundary as well. With the new developments along Homewood Avenue have come new street signs, which identify the blocks north to Hamilton Avenue as Point Breeze. This allows businesses to advertise their location as the more desirable neighborhood. And quite possibly it has been easier to fill the housing units in this area by allowing the new occupants to identify their residence as Point Breeze. Thus the racial, social and economic currents which have the swept Homewood's boundaries northward and southward throughout its history continue to flow.

Cultural Traditions and Events

One of the liveliest events in Homewood over the past decade has been the Harambee Festival

of African Arts, which is held the third weekend of August. Vendors lined several blocks along Homewood Avenue and its side streets, offering African and African-American clothing, jewelry, artifacts, music recordings, ethnic foods, and literature. Parades, dances, drill teams, fashion shows, and dramatic productions by local groups were interspersed with main-stage appearances by nationally known bands and speakers. As many as thirty thousand people crowded the streets for the annual weekend celebrations of the African heritage of Homewood's dominant population. African Americans from neighborhoods all over the surrounding area and people of every other ethnic background thronged to Homewood for a weekend marred by no shadow of gang violence or street crime.

By 1992 the Festival had outgrown its space (now filled by the new Rite-Aid Pharmacy store), and the organizers declared a year's leave for regrouping. But Homewood could not allow such a fine tradition to lapse. To fill the vacuum, new organizers, working with the business community, announced the Homewood Alive! African Arts Festival--for the same weekend as previous Harambee Festivals, August 20 through 22, 1993. I asked residents of Homewood and North Point Breeze why it was important to fill the void, even though the Homewood Alive! Festival might be less extensive than recent Harambee events. One suggested that the motivation was commercial, to give vendors their opportunity; another had not heard that such an event was planned. But others described the Harambee Festival as "The Pride of Homewood." It draws the people together "with a tremendous sense of pride," because people come from everywhere "for something that they can't get anyplace else that's absolutely wonderful." It's not just a Homewood community festival, "it's a festival of the African-American experience."

Some people see the vendors as more than commercial opportunists; they are African-American business people who are making their living helping African Americans claim their identity. "That's exactly what makes this so special," commented Rasheed Sundiata, a history teacher at CCAC-Allegheny. "In a couple of blocks you can get just about everything pertaining to African history, African-American identity. . . . Whatever people are seeking, they can find it right here. . . . It's like an

African marketplace." (Rasheed is right; Homewood Avenue on Saturday, August 21, reminded me of an African marketplace--I loved it!).

People expressed great satisfaction at disproving the prevailing stereotypes about the Homewood environment. Rasheed points out that this event lets people know "that we are a people who can get along together." There have been no shootings, no drug traffic. "You see families, you see adults with children, babies, having a good time." And the young children themselves are "seeing a positive reflection of African-American culture and life." Some Pittsburgh police, including white officers, were in evidence, but the more effective security force were community persons who were obviously on the alert, determined to prevent any potential disturbance from developing. No gang colors were flaunted here. Nothing and no one would be allowed to mar this communal celebration.

This particular area of Homewood Avenue has been a festival site for many years, and African Americans are accustomed to gather here in the summer. As Rasheed Sundiata said, "This is our spot here in the city. This is where we really feel at home."

Music has always been a major part of Homewood's festivals. "The music is what really draws people in." A drummer who participated in a performance on Saturday afternoon remembers music festivals nearly thirty years ago when he was a young child, at this same place. There was always "some kind of cultural event" here in the summer. Performers like George Benson who have gone on to become "big names" played, and he found these events very significant in shaping his own identity. These Homewood festivals and the Black Arts Festivals on the Hill (including one at the Civic Arena), "made me want to be more creative, and say, if my people were this great, and they did all this, where should I start, and how can I become like they were?"

Every interviewee who spoke of the Harambee festivals stressed their significance in helping young people understand the richness of their African and African-American heritage. They learn "where they fit in in society." They see significant role models and gain a sense of their history, learn to prize the heritage of black heroes. And, to have the opportunity to join a large crowd of their "own

kind," participating in a happy, bustling, varied series of events that highlight the artistic and social traditions of the African and African-American community, helps to counteract the strong negative self-images which bombard them in the public media and in their interaction with many aspects of white society.

Daka, the drummer, sees continuity from African village festivals and from celebrations in slavery times. These gatherings allow people to display what they have been working on during the year, sharing their artistic accomplishments and crafts products with the community.

Though the Homewood Alive! Festival this year was somewhat smaller than the Harambee Festivals had become in recent years, vendor Mary Williams observed that the young children were having a happier time. They were freer to circulate, and there were a number of activities planned for them. The smaller crowd made the interaction more personal.

For the business community, the Homewood Alive! African Arts Festival of 1993 displayed the accomplishment of Homewood's civic leaders in the refurbishing of Homewood Avenue, and the building of the Rite-Aid store, as an anchor to the retail services in Homewood. They banded together to support the festival, and to provide auxiliary activities. Ramseys II Lounge featured "The Official Unofficial Black Arts Festival After Party" for participants (with proper dress and ID) who wanted to extend the celebration. Other establishments provided similar opportunities. Whatever form the Homewood summer festival takes in the future, there is no question that the community regards this tradition as essential in nourishing the spirit of Homewood.

While this festival weekend may be Homewood's most public display of community identity and solidarity, many community and church-oriented activities confirm and sustain African American social and cultural traditions throughout the year. Church choir festivals; the Jazz Workshop which meets at the Homewood branch of the Carnegie Library; locally produced dramatic productions; fashion shows featuring African fabrics and jewelry; the traditional cuisine of the Southern Platter restaurant; dramatic, inspirational sermons preached in the best tradition of African-American verbal art (by young pastors as

well as by their elders); to name only a sample, nourish the lives of people in this neighborhood.

Visions for the Future

Concern and skepticism cloud the visions of the probable future for Homewood. The most important ingredient for a hopeful future in every interviewee's view lies in restoring the economic base of the community, through jobs (including public works employment which would repair and rebuild Homewood), through government policies to guarantee a minimal standard of living, through access to a good education to reinforce a positive self- identity for African-American young people, and through the restoration of access to goods and services within the community. Several persons spoke to the need for African Americans to commit themselves to supporting Homewood's African-American businesses, rather than spending their money outside the community, and for business proprietors to persist in spite of the discouragement of their vulnerability to robbery.

The most pessimistic prospect, described by Barbara Rogers, foresees the hardening of the trend toward a permanent underclass, and that the Black Holocaust "which white America refuses to recognize" will continue. The fratricide will deepen because the root causes will not be seriously addressed, "and the devastation that's in the black community is going to remain internal" and become increasingly severe. Worse, she fears that a significant segment of white America will not care. As Rev. Leroy Patrick observed, most of white America today sees these problems as "your problem," not "our problem." Clearly, none of the interviewees seriously believes that Homewood or any other community will ever be truly integrated, or that the African-American community can expect much assistance from the white power structures.

Having said that, these residents show by their continued commitment that they will never give up on Homewood as a community. People like Tina and John Brewer, and the church, business and civic leaders in Homewood will continue to spend their lives dreaming, restoring, building, and nurturing the lives and the landscapes of this still-proud neighborhood.

Point Breeze

Point Breeze was named for a hotel and tavern that Thomas McKeown established in the area. As has been indicated, the area now known as Point Breeze was formerly included in the Homewood neighborhood, and the zip code remains the same as that of Homewood. The area from the railway tracks south toward Squirrel Hill is usually referred to as Point Breeze, between Wilkinsburg and East Liberty, with Penn Avenue functioning as the axis between Point Breeze and North Point Breeze.

Shifting Settlement Patterns

Much of this story has been told in the overview of the history of Homewood. Point Breeze is the area in which the earliest homes were the estates of wealthy industrialists. As some of the large plots were subdivided, smaller but still substantial homes were built by the professional persons with connections to those estates. For example, the personal physician to the Heinz family lived in a house that still stands on Lang Avenue, the street with the oldest homes in North Point Breeze. On both sides of Penn Avenue, large homes and some of the mansions that gave Point Breeze its image of elegance still predominate, among smaller but still solid single-family dwellings, duplex houses and a few apartment houses. South Point Breeze boasts Clayton House, the mansion of Henry Clay Frick, which has recently been restored and now functions as a museum. At the south end of those grounds, at the edge of Frick Park, lies the Frick Art Museum, which includes a small concert hall.

The residents of South Homewood responded to the population shifts in Homewood during the 1950s and 1960s by renaming the area south of the railroad tracks Point Breeze, to disassociate themselves from the increasing African-American presence. The population of Point Breeze on both sides of Penn Avenue was at that time over-whelming middle and upper class Euro-American. The area south of Penn Avenue, usually referred to simply as Point Breeze, has undergone the least substantial population change of the four neighborhoods in this survey. The population has declined somewhat, but

it is still 93% white, down only 2% from 1980. Of the remaining 7%, 4.5% are black, 2.5% are classified as "other," and 0.8% percent are Hispanic. Some of this diversity results from the number of graduate students who occupy apartments. However, since the 1960s, North Point Breeze, the area between Homewood proper and Penn Avenue, has become increasingly racially mixed, as middle-class African-American families have purchased homes there. As of the 1990 census, 67.8% of the population was black. Whatever the fears of older, long-term residents, the younger white families who also have moved in during these years have tended to be comfortable with the increasing diversity, and some deliberately chose North Point Breeze because they wanted to be part of an integrated neighborhood. Others settled there because they could get comparable housing to that on the other side of Penn Avenue, but at significantly lower cost, and did not consider the racial diversity a deterrent. These families have enjoyed raising their children in this comfortable, attractive residential neighborhood, with easy access to good schools, public transportation, and recreation facilities.

Neighborhood identity is strong, and some residents emphasize that they live in North Point Breeze to distance themselves from the reputation for exclusiveness and elitism that has characterized the Point Breeze to the south of Penn Avenue. Many of these people were politically active in the civil-rights and anti-war protests of the 1960s, and continue to be active in social and environmental causes. It is not insignificant that the East End Co-op, a health food cooperative that moved from Semple Street in Oakland, continues to thrive here, at the Braddock Avenue end of Meade Street.

A number of the residents take great pride in restoring the oldest houses in Point Breeze, and point out that there is no difference in the care taken by African-American and Euro-American homeowners. As Paul Brecht commented, the argument that neighborhoods automatically decline when they become racially mixed, simply "don't wash." Despite this, redlining by real estate agents is a demonstrable factor in increasing the black population in North Point Breeze and in keeping the other side of Penn Avenue more homogeneous and white.

Connections to Homewood

Though Point Breeze emerged as a separate neighborhood in an effort to create distance from the black population in North Homewood, some of the middle-class African-Americans who now reside there intentionally blur that boundary. The axis of division is now Penn Avenue rather than the railway line. The African-American interviewees from North Point Breeze consciously maintain significant connections in Homewood, either for convenience, or because they grew up there, or because they want to show solidarity with Homewood as an African-American community. When asked where she lives, Barbara Rogers gives her zip code, 15208, which is recognized as Homewood, rather than saying she lives in Point Breeze. And she and her husband patronize black businesses and services in Homewood out of a serious commitment to supporting the economic base there. They and others maintain church relationships in Homewood or East Liberty.

This attitude of conscious commitment is not so likely to characterize older South Point Breeze residents. But Polly McQueen, who is white, has sent her son to school at the highly regarded Homewood Montessori school, and moves freely in and through Homewood. She wants her sons to learn to relate to friends of every background, and works hard to counteract stereotypes of African Americans as threatening or hostile persons. Despite the fact that they've lost seven bikes in six years and that black children have in some instances been seen taking them, she helps her sons recognize that this "redistribution of bike wealth" is motivated by economic factors rather than by race.

The paranoid avoidance of the area around Homewood by her friends from the suburbs angers her; she parks on McPherson in North Point Breeze when she takes the bus downtown, confident that the black families there will keep an eye on her car. She believes that her openness is not unusual among South Point Breeze residents of her generation and educational background, though her older neighbors might respond differently.

When Point Breeze separated itself from Homewood in the 1950s and 1960s, Westinghouse Park unofficially became off-limits to the residents of Homewood. As the population of North Point

Breeze has come to include more African Americans who use Westinghouse Park, the residents of Homewood have also felt freer to make use of it. On several recent occasions when large gatherings from Homewood were planned, some North Point Breeze residents became alarmed. Though the issue of race was never acknowledged, both a white and a black interviewee felt that much of the apprehension arose from that source. (The events took place with no resulting problems.)

Frick Park, which extends to the edge of the Frick property, is an extensive recreation area that many Point Breeze residents enjoy. Some of the more elderly residents are fearful of venturing far into the park, but Polly McQueen, who has taken long walks there nearly every day of the twenty years she has resided in Point Breeze, has never felt threatened. However, until recently she seldom saw African-Americans using the park. She was pleased to report that this summer on several occasions she saw black families using Frick Park for picnics. While they may have been among the few black residents of South Point Breeze or from North Point Breeze, she assumed that they were from Homewood. She felt that most of the neighbors her age and younger would share her sense that this was a healthy sign of greater openness to the diversity of the adjoining areas.

Neighborhood Units

North Point Breeze residents know how to get action from city authorities. They had the 7100 block of Meade Street turned into a one-way street to keep factory traffic out when their children needed to play there after school. The Point Breeze Coalition is a strong neighborhood organization that has successfully addressed public safety issues and other family concerns. They had stop signs posted along Thomas Boulevard to halt midnight drag racing, and had loiterers in Westinghouse Park cleared out. They also are reported to have had trees planted across the park in such a pattern as to deter young men from playing football there, a move Barbara Rogers argues was unnecessary and misguided, as "playing football is one of the better things they could be doing there!"

In addition to such environmental concerns, the Coalition has sponsored cultural events. During

the past several years they have organized a concert series that is hosted in homes, followed by a wine-and-cheese social hour.

Recently the North Point Breeze Development Corporation has evolved from the Coalition, which is studying the future needs of the neighborhood, and is planning ways to influence positive change. All of these activities are supported equally by black and white residents; differences in perspective tend to emerge along socio-economic rather than racial lines.

A frequent concern has been the establishment of group homes in the area, taking advantage of the large houses that are easily adapted to such use. Peg Albert commented that the same people always protest, and each time the anticipated problems do not materialize; several group homes have come and gone. One or two homes for senior citizens remain in the area, and some families are happy to relate to these neighbors, adopting surrogate grandparents and Christmas caroling for the residents.

Block parties on both sides of Penn Avenue have been a lively tradition. The Meade Street block party in North Point Breeze drew participants from adjoining streets like Thomas Boulevard. As the forty-some children who played in the 7100 block of Meade Street have grown and moved away, their parents relate less closely, and that block party is no longer a regular occurrence. Recently public safety concerns have renewed the cohesiveness of the block; they have formed a Block Watch, and they are visiting informally again.

Across Penn Avenue, where a number of the streets bordering Frick Park are quiet cul-de-sacs, block identity is unusually strong. Ben Hur Street, where Polly McQueen has lived for nearly twenty years, functions as an extended family. As the older single persons living on the street have died or moved into retirement homes, young professionals have replaced them. These engineers, lawyers, television and newspaper journalists, arts management people and their young children not only have two block parties a years--during the Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends--but socialize, share child care, and support each other at a fairly intensive emotional level. Recently when one couple adopted a baby from Peru, everyone on the block shared the several months' anticipation, eagerly

awaited the family's arrival from the airport--and gathered around for an unabashedly emotional welcome. If, as the African proverb says, it "takes a whole village to raise a child," this child will be well-nurtured, in an urban village!

Ben Hur Street has a long history of shared fun. Part of the neighborhood lore is the story of how they chartered a bus to go together to see the movie Ben Hur when it was first released. This quiet street of twenty families may be unusually cohesive, but Polly reports that there are great block parties on a number of the surrounding streets. She believes that block identity is stronger than neighborhood identity in the South Point Breeze area.

Cultural Traditions and Events

Westinghouse Park is used for more than recreation by the residents of Homewood and North Point Breeze. It has also become a venue for activities that reinforce African-American cultural and social traditions. A Black Arts Festival was held there recently, smaller and less well publicized than the Harambee and Homewood Alive! Festivals (and it rained!). Black history classes are conducted there on Monday evenings. African-style drummers have practiced there. Church and community choirs sometimes perform there. And a reunion of African-American Vietnam War Veterans gathered there this summer.

An important strand of African-American artistic tradition is being preserved and transformed by a group of women who began meeting in Point Breeze, the African-American Heritage Quilters Guild. The Guild is not specifically identified with Point Breeze, though one of its founders, Michael Reed, lived on Thomas Boulevard at the time. She actively recruited the young girls from the neighborhood for quilting lessons.

Now the Guild meets regularly at the Lemmington Retirement Home in Homewood, or at the members' homes in various areas of the city. When I met with them on the North Side in the home of the current president Ruth Ward, seven women, ranging in age from thirty-something to (I would guess)

thirty years older than that, joined me at the dining room table to discuss their work.

Their grandmothers and mothers often quilted to get the most possible use out of scraps of cloth, and to design inexpensive bedclothes; they transformed economic necessity into artistic as well as practical cultural expression. Several members described the quilt-in-progress which always hung on a clothesline across the living room or kitchen, ready to be pulled down when the day allowed for a few minutes to sit and stitch. Joy Mays said her grandmother thought she had lost her mind when she talked about learning to quilt. To her grandmother, that quilt represented punishment. Instead of being told to "take time out" when she misbehaved, her sentence was, "get the quilt down!" But Ruth Ward has fond associations with the hanging quilt; it made a lovely canopy under which to play.

The Guild members don't quilt out of necessity; they have discovered quilting as an art form, and in the process, a number of them are realizing that their particular approach to technique and design reflects a distinctive African-American aesthetic. When I asked them what is uniquely African-American about their work, they talked first about their use of vibrant, intense colors and the way their designs tend to evolve rather than resulting from a detailed, pre-planned layout. Christine Bethea told of working with a white quilting instructor who eventually understood her sense of constraint in the traditional approaches to color and design. She told Christine to just forget the models, choose the colors that appealed to her, and work with them in her own way. When she brought her piece to the group, everyone gasped at the intensity and boldness of her composition--but her work helped to free them, too.

Other distinctive elements include their use of multiple patterns, and images and symbols that relate to African-American culture: a snake, a river, chains, a tree, dark-skinned figures, dancers, drums. Some of them enjoy strip quilting, a tradition that is related to the way West African fabrics are sometimes produced. They find that they like working three-dimensional patterns into their work. And most of them realize that they do not concentrate on technical details such as neat, square corners and tiny stitches as much as their white colleagues might. The interest in their pieces tends to reside in the

sense of visual energy and rhythm. Joy Mays disagreed; for her those quilting skills are important. She is an African American who quilts, not a quilter whose work expresses her African-American identity. For several of the others, however, the discovery of the rich tradition of African and African-American fiber art has been exciting, and they enjoy seeing continuities in their work with the traditional heritage. (They referred me to several books on African-American quilt traditions that are listed in the bibliography.)

In their monthly meetings the Guild members find stimulus in seeing each other's work (though the social interaction is sometimes at least as important). But they have also found that the residents of the Lemmington Home enjoy seeing their work. And out of this interaction has come a wonderful quilt made of squares designed by the residents, which is now displayed in the lobby. So the renewal of the quilting heritage radiates to older as well as younger generations. And Joy Mays reports that her grandmother now thinks it's a good idea to have a quilter in the family. Even her grandfather has joined in the fun--he has made a quilt out of bowling towels!

On the other side of Penn Avenue, on Leroy Avenue off Reynolds, lie the grounds of the Pittsburgh Swedenborgian New Church. Unlike its parent congregation at Bernathan, Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia, or the group at Freeport/Sarver who send their children to the school in Point Breeze, the Pittsburgh congregation lives dispersed in the city, though a number of families reside in the Point Breeze area near the church and school. Traditionally, members of the New Church have lived in tightly knit isolated rural communities, away from the distracting influences of "the world." Though the male heads of households pursue professional careers in the city in higher education, engineering, medicine, law, or finance, women have tended to find their roles as homemakers and mothers.

Adherents of the Swedenborgian faith value an education that instills intellectual discipline. Elementary and secondary school curricula include the study of classical languages, particularly Latin--the language in which the Swedish philosopher Swedenborg wrote--and Hebrew and Greek--the languages in which the Bible ("the Word of the Lord") was written. Other cultural values revolve around

a family-centered social structure and ritual celebrations which highlight the importance of betrothal, marriage and the nurturing of children, and the importance of winning one's place in heaven after death. These rituals embody strong artistic traditions in the visual arts (with symbolic use of color and design) and music (with an emphasis on the art music of the Baroque period).

Visitors are welcome at services, but Polly McQueen, who grew up in the Bernathan community but has lived in Pittsburgh for the past twenty years, described a strong sense of exclusiveness, of being the chosen few who alone have an understanding of truth, which instilled a view of the world at large she has now rejected. At the same time, as members of the Pittsburgh congregation are intentionally "of the world" as well as "in the world," I suspect the strong commitment to community which characterizes their faith enhances the cohesiveness of the South Point Breeze neighborhood.

Visions for the Future

Point Breeze interviewees from both sides of Penn Avenue are optimistic about the future in their neighborhoods. They expect continued stability, given the sense of pride and satisfaction residents feel. They are willing to invest themselves and their resources to maintain the community and their creative energy to finding ways to prepare for the future. A possible threat to North Point Breeze could emerge from real estate practices, which could lead to blockbusting and conversion of one-family dwellings to multiple family units. However, the Coalition would be alert to this trend. Peg Albert believes that the twenty-year history of successful integration bodes well for a stable future.

Polly McQueen is concerned about increasing drug dependency, which may lead to increasing theft and threat of violence. The loss of safety would be her worst fear. But she, too, is hopeful that the community will address such problems in a creative way. She would like to see South Point Breeze become more racially diverse, like North Point Breeze. And she regards the Frick Museum and Clayton House as anchors to the stability of the neighborhood. With the renovation of Clayton, traffic has become more congested, but people in the neighborhood view the development of this cultural

center to be so positive that they can tolerate the inconvenience. The people who come to the museums and to the bocci court nearby are quiet folks who do not threaten or deface these quiet streets. She believes that members of other ethnic groups who could afford to buy homes in this area would be likely to share the social and cultural values of the residents and would benefit the community rather than undermine it.

East Liberty

Shifting Settlement Patterns

Like Homewood, the East Liberty area has had a prosperous and diverse history in terms of its economic development and settlement patterns. The names of the original East Liberty Valley plantation owners, whose farms ranged from just over 100 acres to nearly 450 acres (Collins n.d.[ca 1966], 20), reflect their largely British-American heritage. Their deeds date from 1769 to 1845. Many of those names still appear on street signs in East Liberty Valley neighborhoods.

In his book Stringtown on the Pike, John Fulton Stuart Collins, Jr. details the history of the East Liberty Valley from prehistoric times to the mid-1960s. "The Pike," Greensburg Pike or Forbes Road, which was the route east by stagecoach or by foot to Philadelphia, eventually became Penn Avenue; it is still a major thoroughfare through Pittsburgh, and through the neighborhood of East Liberty. An 1839 map of the Village of East Liberty shows the beginnings of the residential, retail and services center East Liberty would become. Among the landmarks still in existence is the Emory Methodist Episcopal Church, which was built in 1832. In 1847 the list of residents included a wide variety of craftsmen and laborers among the merchants, "gentlemen," farmers and professional people. The coming of the Pennsylvania Central Railroad in 1851 opened the area to the influx of European immigrants fleeing political instability and drawn to the burgeoning industries anchored by the steel, glass, natural gas and electrical companies. From the opening of the East Liberty station in 1854, twenty-six trains a day transported residents to and from town (Collins, n.d., 65).

The growth of new churches and denominations during the nineteenth century indicated the growing diversity in East Liberty. St. Peter's Evangelical Luthern Church was established in 1839 by German Protestants, and the first Roman Catholic church in the area, Sts. Peter and Paul, was established in 1857, to serve the German Catholic community. Calvary Episcopal Church and East Liberty Presbyterian Church served the growing Anglo-American population, and by 1870 the few African-American families in the area had formed the nucleus of the St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1871, Sacred Heart Catholic Church was established for the mostly Irish, non-German-speaking Catholic residents.

During the late nineteenth century, the wealthier residents were moving farther out of the city, and many middle-class families were being drawn to the cleaner air and easy accessibility of the East Liberty area. By 1910 the population had grown to nearly 47,000. The boom years following the Civil War also brought greater ethnic diversity among the residents. Greek, Jewish and Eastern European workers joined the mix, and Italians came in increasing numbers. In 1889 the Italian community requested that the Roman Catholic diocese form an Italian parish, which was established in the Hill District, and in 1898 Our Lady Help of Christians Church was opened in East Liberty (Golden Jubilee 1948). Italian Presbyterian and Lutheran churches served the Italian Protestant community.

Images of the Past

By the early decades of the twentieth century, East Liberty had risen to its "peak or crest of progress. Industry was booming, schools were being rebuilt and the social life of the community flourished as amusements, such as theatre and movies, were at an all time high" (Collins, n.d., 163). East Liberty interviewees still recall this era of prosperity with fervent nostalgia. Even during the Depression of the 1930s, when Pat Curran's parents moved here, this was an area where displaced workers might find ways to survive.

Though the concentration of Italian residences and businesses in the Larimer Avenue area

became an important locus of that tight-knit group, throughout East Liberty people of various ethnic backgrounds lived and worked side by side. Several interviewees recalled the exchange of racial epithets among youngsters, and a strong sense of superiority which operated within ethnic and religious groups, and which condoned "talking down" about other groups. While little social interaction may have taken place between groups, and while the experience of African-American residents may have been relatively less comfortable, all of the interviewees spoke enthusiastically of East Liberty as having been a safe, comfortable, diverse community, from which one had little need to venture.

All the necessary goods and services, including a wealth of recreational and entertainment facilities, were here. East Liberty was a "second Downtown," and vastly preferable to the Downtown area. People drove to East Liberty from many outlying areas to shop and to enjoy the entertainment. Even those going Downtown for an evening often stopped in East Liberty to eat at one of the fine restaurants.

There was plenty for young people to do. Programs at the Y and at Kingsley House provided a variety of recreational and educational offerings, and one could see "any movie you wanted to see" at one of the nine theaters. In the 1950s youngsters could see a double feature "and seventeen cartoons" for a few dimes. In thinking about her family, Geraldine Garnett realized that the reason she didn't take her children to such places as the zoo or the museum was because they were so busy playing in the neighborhood, and they had so many activities at Kingsley House down the street that they felt no need for other diversions.

The best in live entertainment was also available. Many of the famous music and theater personalities, including playwright George S. Kaufmann, dancer Gene Kelly and actor Dick Powell, whose photographs now hang on the wall of the East Liberty Chamber of Commerce, could be seen and heard right here. East Liberty has been the home of some of the finest jazz musicians in the country, including Erroll Garner, Billy Eckstine and Mary Lou Williams, and classical musicians Patricia Prattis Jennings and Lorin Maazel also have East Liberty connections.

Perspectives on the Present

As is true of Homewood, many interrelated factors have contributed to the loss of East Liberty's proud identity as a safe, comfortable, dynamic, self-sufficient community. Though all of the interviewees from East Liberty (except one who has moved from the area) protested that East Liberty's negative image is largely undeserved, there is no denying that the retail base is largely gone, many of the younger middle and upper-class families have moved to the suburbs, and all of the theaters and up-scale restaurants have closed. Between 1980 and 1990 East Liberty suffered nearly a 9% population loss, including a 30% loss among the white population. The percentage of African Americans rose from 47% to 58% between 1980 and 1990. As older residents depart, their homes, often not as well maintained as they had been earlier, tend to be sold to larger families of lesser economic stability or converted into multi-family rental units or university student housing.

In addition to the replication in East Liberty of the exodus from Homewood, the "kiss of death" for the East Liberty business community was the federally funded urban renewal project in the 1970s, which closed Penn Avenue to through-traffic, razed the surrounding residential district, erected several high-rise apartment buildings, and created a large traffic circle around the once-thriving retail center. As Ralph Proctor says, it removed many of the people who shopped there, and as both Paul Brecht and Pat Curran observed, it drove shoppers away. The traffic circle was confusing--and still is; people get lost, and in frustration go elsewhere to shop. Pat says, "You couldn't drive through East Liberty and see a store, and say, 'Oh, I like that dress in that window,' because you can't see that window." As business declined, the better merchants moved out. Penn Avenue and several of the other through-streets have recently been re-opened, but the not-so-merry Penn Circle go-round remains. Bringing business back is more difficult.

Pat Curran, who remembers East Liberty as "a nice, nice community," very comfortable and safe as she was growing up, still maintains that she feels no inhibition or sense of threat as she goes

about her business in East Liberty except at night. Then she takes the precaution of locking her car doors--as she would anywhere. Geraldine Garnett, who travels by bus, feels less secure in traveling at night. But she is adamant that East Liberty is still the only place in the world where she would want to live. She loves her quiet Lyric Street, and visits regularly with her neighbors of thirty years, Italian, German and African-American. They have raised their families together. She says if she won the lottery, she'd tear down her house and build on the same spot!

Paul Brecht, Executive Director of the East Liberty Chamber of Commerce, regrets the apathy among many of the business people of East Liberty, but is working to build positive networks of support in the community and greater awareness of East Liberty's heritage. He sees the renovation of the Regent Center Theater as a performing arts center and a Hollywood-style Walk of Fame as ways to recapture a sense of pride in East Liberty's people. He believes the departure of Sears will in the long run be beneficial in making way for major redevelopment. He hopes to draw some of the overflow of Oakland's medical institutions to East Liberty.

Perhaps the group with the most remarkable sense of identity with East Liberty as their home was the Italian community that clustered around Larimer Avenue. Herb Amen, who was instrumental in forming the Larimer Avenue Social Club, laughingly recalls, "If you weren't Italian, you were a foreigner!" Among the thousands of families who have migrated to Penn Hills and other points to the east of East Liberty are many who recall the world of "L.A.," which "Cookie" Rizzo described in a poem:

> Across the seas in ships they came,
> you know who they are,
> your name is the same.
>
> To a small Italian Village called "L.A.",
> far from their Homeland,
> they would venture to stay. (Larimer Avenue Social Club 2nd Annual Dinner Dance Reunion program, 1987)

In 1985 Herb Amen wrote an editorial calling "ALL of our L.A. Families together in friendship

as it once was in the past." For those who still had "a special feeling inside. . . when the AVENUE is mentioned," his description of that world was irresistible:

From the rooftop of Sebastian's Gas Station to the Pinnacle of the no longer existing White Tower Restaurant, once existed a beautiful and close-knit Italian Village. Our kind of town--L.A. was.

> LARIMER AVENUE is a feeling of how it used to be. Memories--so many beautiful memories! From generations of children running their hands through the sawdust of Harris-McKeever Meat Market, to the long lines on Friday night to get a fish sandwich at Kreuer's Cafe.
>
> It didn't matter if you lived on Orphan Street or Auburn Street. You could be from St. Marie Street, Collins Avenue or Apple Avenue, you know in your heart that you were in L.A. (Reprinted in the 1987 program listed above, and in several other LASC publications)

While Larimer Avenue in East Liberty is the geographical locus of this sense of Italian community, these lines indicate that Italians from Homewood shared the identity with "L.A." Just as "in Pittsburgh you're black first, then you're from the Hill or Homewood," one is also Italian first. Larimer Avenue represents a spot in Pittsburgh where that identity resided, a place now distant in time and, to some extent, lost in space through urban renewal projects and restreeting patterns.

Amen's editorial continued a litany of the sights, sounds, smells and tastes--and the feelings of safety and belonging that made Larimer Avenue in East Liberty a center of Italian life. As he said to me, "You didn't have to have much money there; everybody was open, they helped one another." Amen started a newsletter, "Famiglia," and the Larimer Avenue Social Club was born. L.A.S.C. continues through its newsletter, monthly meetings, an annual dinner dance, picnics, trips, and the gathering of photographs, stories, and memorabilia of life on Larimer Avenue. Former East Liberty residents come from all over the country for some of the annual events.

The sharing of memories and memorabilia takes many forms. The 1987 dinner dance reunion

booklet lists two pages of "Nicknames - 'L.A. Style,'" which ends with the reminder, "These names were given in ridicule, affection or acclaim. We, of the LASC, believe they were given in GREAT affection or even in GREATER acclaim."

When the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh decided to close Our Lady Help of Christians, the parish around which much of the East Liberty Italian community had centered, B. J. Perfetto decided that the history of the parish and the final mass at the church should be documented. He produced a videotape which is available through the Larimer Avenue Social Club.

The sense of a brave new world lost echoes in lines from "Cookie" Rizzo's poem:

> The Exodus was frightening, a scramble to the Hills,
> neighbors asking one another, "Will you be leaving . . .
> still?["]
> Decisions made hastily were hard to bear,
> only much later, did we realize how much we really cared.

Though Herb Amen says "It isn't so much that we were running or moving, . . . [it was] just the time itself, . . . evolution. . . the younger generation like myself didn't want to live like our grandparents," the nostalgia for Larimer Avenue has both strong negative and positive strains. The delight in small remembrances bonds these former neighbors. "People even save little pieces of stone as memories, because it was just great growing up down there." But some of the expressions of the contrast between the past and the present betray the roots of the negative image that people like Paul Brecht and Pat Curran deplore. To Herb Amen, East Liberty is now a place where "people get shot in the face." He is amazed that some elderly Italian families still return to attend mass at Holy Rosary Church in Homewood, where, in his view shootings and drug dealing are constant and pervasive, and his perceptions of East Liberty today can be expressed only in lament.

Ralph Proctor, Executive Director of Kingsley House, is also less optimistic than Paul Brecht, but for different reasons. Like interviewees from Homewood and North Point Breeze, he speaks from

a deep-rooted commitment to the (largely) African-American community that Kingsley House now serves. He agrees that the community was devastated by urban renewal, but believes that people tend to fixate on the loss and do not see the strengths that remain. They say the YMCA is gone and Kingsley House has moved. But he argues that Kingsley House is as active as ever, still providing a wide range of educational and recreational activities for young people, and is, if anything, more accessible now than when it was in the heart of East Liberty, because it is on neutral territory. And the Y is reviving some of its programs.

Cultural Traditions and Events

Despite their largely negative reflections on the East Liberty of today, the members of the Larimer Avenue Social Club are a group of people who are keeping alive many aspects of Italian traditional culture. They are for the most part, however, no longer residents of East Liberty.

In East Liberty, Ralph Proctor and his staff at Kingsley House stress the importance of African culture in giving African-Americans a nourishing sense of identity. Ralph is the person most knowledgeable of African art in the Pittsburgh area. He has gathered a collection of several hundreds of pieces, which he presents from a profound understanding of their social, historical and religious context.

It is this larger context which he stresses. Proctor believes that American society in general has failed to understand and give the proper respect to African art as art; seeing, touching, and learning about these pieces helps to counteract that misperception. But young people also need to be grounded in an African world view. Central to African philosophy is the belief that the good of the community outweighs the [wishes of] the individual. A sense of loyalty to the community is expressed in the proverb, "One does not count the digit of the nine-toed man in public." If young people can gain "a sense that they, too, sprang from a very positive cultural tradition," they may be able to resist internalizing the negative stereotypes which are so destructive of their sense of self-worth. He believes

the African emphasis on rites of passage which provide a demarcation between childhood and adulthood is valuable. "I think that a lot of the kids who have been in rites of passage in Afro-centric programs have responded very positively."

The programs at Kingsley House are also designed to help young people realize how many African "holdover patterns" are vital in African-American culture, such as speech, religion, kinship structures, concepts of personal space, what is considered "personal information," and storytelling traditions. Ralph says when he started studying African culture, he was considered "an oddball." Now young people are interested in studying "the old ways." He believes that "in the future there will be more griots than there are now." A significant transformation of the African griot historian/ storyteller tradition can be seen in the congregational production of Barbara Rogers's play, "I, Too, Have a Dream," by the Lincoln Avenue Church of God. Barbara, who I felt most clearly articulated the importance of African-American cultural traditions of any of the people I interviewed, believes that "the church is one of the strongest keepers of African-American culture that exists."

Among the art forms fostered in the church are preaching ("The whole style of preaching is a wonderful art, as well as a ministry"); gospel music and spirituals; fashion shows featuring African attire, jewelry and fabrics; use of African or African-American art or motifs to embellish church bulletins or programs; drama groups in Vacation Bible School and recreational programs that work "from an African-American cultural perspective;" and food preparation and the communal sharing of meals. "All of that is integrated into the life of the church at a very deep level, always has been, always will be."

Rogers believes in the power of artistic cultural expression. Though she has worked in various other settings, she prefers to work through the church in designing programs and projects to address the critical needs of the African-American community. She lives in North Point Breeze, patronizes many of the retail and service establishments in Homewood, and serves on the ministerial team at Lincoln Avenue Church of God in East Liberty.

"I, Too, Have a Dream" grew as a response to a Bill Moyers special, The Vanishing Black Family, which she saw in 1986. She developed the Christian Life Skills program to "engender Christian life skills, values and behaviors in children, youth and adults and families, particularly African-Americans." The play emerged as part of a plan to develop supplementary videos "that would capture other aspects of the life skills," such as "a sense of one's identity." Images of African-American experience on the public media, she says, do not portray "the essence of the positive historical black values and black traditions." Her dramatic reenactment of the lives of Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and Mary McLeod Bethune was designed to weave together "a picture of their spirituality, which is a very important value in the black community; their courage in the face of extreme odds and tremendous oppression, which is still an issue in the black community; and their family life, which is also a strong value in the black community."

After two years of research, Barbara wrote the play and recruited teenagers for the lead roles, "so they were getting an opportunity to live into the lives of those women." The inter-generational cast ranged in age from three to sixty-three. The musical drama involved the King of Glory dancers, the Lincoln Avenue Church of God Inspirational Choir, and numerous members of the congregation.

Barbara sees the play as "an organic experience." Surrounding young people with a supportive community was a primary goal: the way she nurtured the young actors, encouraging them to find in themselves the resources to bring their characters to life; the way people from the congregation pitched in to design and create costumes, stage props, and manage the organizational details; the interaction with the audience; the children selling sweet-potato pies--"the play turned on that value [of community]." The congregation and the choir owned this production; it was not Barbara's play, it was "ours."

They gave four performances in 1992, including one at the Urban League Auditorium at Northview Heights, which I saw. At the last performance at Lincoln Avenue Church, "people couldn't get into the building because it was so crowded." The black media gave excellent coverage, and people spread the word. The second year, 1993, they gave three performances at Pittsburgh

Theological Seminary under the auspices of the Metro-Urban Institute.

Barbara believes that drama and musical drama are emerging as important means of transmitting values in the African-American community, and she is conscious of the parallels with the function of African storytelling as a means of education. "It could very well be that drama and musical drama [are] going to replace some of the storytelling, just as rap music is possibly replacing the readings that we used to do." She is now hoping to assemble a black male writers' group to create a companion piece about the lives of three African-American males. She is also working on a proposal that involves young people in creating works of art such as sculpture in African art idioms.

Visions for the Future

As Pat Curran remarked, the key to a hopeful future in East Liberty is to increase the buying power of the local population. People must invest themselves in the community as well as their money. "You have to care." She would like to see all the nice shops back, but she recognizes that retail stores must be realistically geared to the community. She believes the Motor Square Garden Mall was doomed from the start because the shops were too expensive for the neighborhood, especially since Shadyside, "which is full of up-scale markets," is just across the fence.

Paul Brecht is optimistic, as he needs to be in his role as Executive Director of the East Liberty Chamber of Commerce. "If we can ever shed ourselves of the image that we have, which is an unfortunate, undeserved image, I can see it as a very thriving community." The six acres now awaiting redevelopment are the largest area of level space in the city, accessible from every direction. He thinks the vacated Sears store could turn into a vocational education facility, and hopes to draw some of the overflow of the Oakland medical community to East Liberty. Though East Liberty will probably never again be the retail center that people remember, service industries can flourish here.

Ralph Proctor is skeptical that the business community will come through for East Liberty. He believes that housing must be rebuilt around the central business district. He sees no coherent plan for

rebuilding; they need "something that puts all the pieces together." Though he believes there is far less violence in East Liberty than in Oakland, public perception condemns East Liberty. There needs to be some way to "create East Liberty as a destination." With the renovation of the Regent Center Theater, the area needs other facilities, such as nightclubs, restaurants where one can hold a business lunch, shops where one can buy a decent suit or a good pair of shoes. There need to be training programs "that would allow people to work in the businesses."

Proctor's skepticism is based on current political reality. He mentioned several instances of decisions made by the city which seem intentionally to isolate East Liberty, allocating it to a substandard position. For example, the recent housing development near Reizenstein School was in East Liberty, but was gerrymandered into Shadyside. And the Ellsworth Street Bridge was closed "to keep traffic from flowing this way." But his commitment to the community is firm: "I will be here whether the community rises again or not; because these kids will always be here." As long as they are here, he will be here working with them. This sense of loyalty was expressed by every person I interviewed who is still resident or personally involved in East Liberty.

Highland Park

Highland Park is much more diverse than South Point Breeze, but it has also retained its image as a middle-class neighborhood. According to the 1990 census, the African-American population numbered 17%. Many of the streets are integrated, with young professional families who are comfortable in a diverse neighbor-hood, just as is true in North Point Breeze. They enjoy renovating the substantial old houses, and a gentrification process is reversing at least some of deterioration resulting from a declining and aging population.

It was not possible in the time available to interview contributors from this neighborhood, but several persons were on my list as starters. Nelson Harrison lives on Highland Avenue and would be glad to share his perceptions of Highland Park. His father, who is eighty-five, also lives in Highland

Park and would be a wonderful contributor of insights about this area as well as Homewood, where he raised his family.

On the Fourth of July, Midge Sauerwein and her husband revived the Sheridan Avenue block-party tradition, which they helped to start twenty-four years ago (reported in Neighbors, 14 July 1993, 13). I don't know them, but I suspect they would be excellent contributors with a historical perspective of some depth. I also have acquaintances on several other Highland Park streets who would be glad to share in interviews or give references.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As indicated in the introductory section, I have approached this survey as a preliminary overview of the four neighborhoods, giving particular attention to the cultural traditions of the African-American residents. Since I believe, as does Hugo Freund, that a much more valid survey of the African-American community needs to be done by persons from within the community, I saw my role to be to document what I could, but perhaps more importantly, to gather suggestions as to the possible strategies for a more extensive survey, and suggest names of persons who could serve as advisory- or steering-committee persons or as fieldworkers.

I found that a number of the African-American interviewees did not respond as directly as I'd hoped to my questions about specific cultural expressions, particularly folk or artistic traditions. Though several persons spoke of the importance of Southern traditions such as cooking, greetings, warmth of personal interaction and religious expression, responses tended to reflect generalized social values. Jesse Bolden returned repeatedly to a strong work ethic, and Booker T. Washington's philosophy of "working with your hands and your head." Rev. Leroy Patrick, retired pastor of Bethesda Presbyterian Church in Homewood spoke at length of civil-rights issues, but resisted identifying specific cultural traditions. Both of these men, however, spoke of the critical importance of black colleges, where students are given an understanding of their historical heritage. Rev. Patrick said he "didn't think [he]

could have made it" through the years of persistent struggle for basic human dignity and civil rights for African Americans in Pittsburgh without that background. Later when Rev. Patrick told me he had advised his son, whose wife is white, that he should take his granddaughter to a black church, "so she knows" she is black as well as white, I asked him to define exactly what the essence of that African-American identity is; what would she be missing if she didn't know that part of her heritage? He hadn't thought of the question in that way before, but when he reflected on it, he said he thought it had to do with a sense of belonging, a kind of community, a way of greeting. He wants his granddaughter to know she is a part of that community, and to know how to move among her people there.

When I commented to Barbara Rogers about the vague response to my questions about cultural traditions, she replied, "I'll tell you why. Everyone knows that the bottom line is economics." Few people have her strong sense of the power of artistic expression to shape young people and to address the urgent social problems facing the African-American community. It is also possible, of course, that the reticence to speak of specific cultural traditions arose from a wariness to respond to such questions from an outsider whom they did not know well enough to be sure how such information would be handled. Clearly the people who knew me best tended to be most open and specific in speaking of cultural traditions.

Several people addressed the importance of working through the churches to implement any future survey. Dr. Larry Glasco suggested asking pastors to name the official or unofficial church historian. These people are rarely asked to contribute to such surveys; they are extremely knowledgeable, and they would know who should be interviewed and what cultural traditions they carry. He felt men such as Frank Bolden, Walter Worthington and Bob Lavell have been overused, and they are tired of being interviewed.

Barbara Rogers agreed that the pastors were an important link, but said that for practical reasons it would be better to make the first contact with the church secretaries. The pastors are extremely busy and it could take months actually to talk with some of them (as she knows from working

closely with many of them). The secretaries often know the congregations as well as the pastors (some of them may have been in their positions longer), and they could give names of historians or culture bearers.

Homewood and the Hill District seem to be the two major centers of African-American experience in Pittsburgh, and they continue to function in this way even for families who have moved "up and out," just as Larimer Avenue does for Italians now living in other neighborhoods. I believe that much remains to be documented about the present vitality of the Homewood community, and highlighting the creativity and courage of the people who continue to invest their lives to build that community is of paramount importance at a time when media reports and the public image of Homewood are overwhelmingly negative. It is important to document traditional folkways which persist, but as I have illustrated, it is just as important to be alert to the transformations of that heritage, new artistic and cultural expressions which arise out of African-American experience today.

Community leaders in the Homewood-Brushton Community Improvement Association, the Homewood-Brushton Revitalization & Development Corporation, Operation Better Block, Inc. and other such organizations are important resource persons. Another significant group (which may overlap these to some extent) are the African-American proprietors along Frankstown Avenue who have retained their clientele and sustained successful business and service establishments for more than thirty years, such as Trower's Cleaners & Shirt Laundry, Gaither Florist Shop, and Dorsey's Radio & Record Shop.

It is important, also, to document the experience of the few Italian families and other white residents who have stayed in Homewood. Joseph and Rosemarie Capone, whom Steve Sapolsky found to be most reflective about the reasons why so many of their family and friends fled Homewood, still feel at home there, despite the recent incident of racial epithets inscribed on their home. They and the other families who return to Homewood for mass would contribute significantly to an understanding of the alternative images that persist in the minds of those who know the essence of Homewood.

I believe Steve Sapolsky is right to suggest that the descendants of Homewood's original African-American residents, those skilled workers who kept the mansions and estates of Pittsburgh's industrialists running elegantly and efficiently, have much to tell. And the members of WEMCO, the social club for black Westinghouse workers, are another group in whose memories reside important chapters of Pittsburgh's labor history. Other labor-related organizations may still exist which I did not discover. I think Jesse Bolden is an important resource person who could suggest contacts in the area of construction-related industries, and some of the persons Ralph Proctor suggested will extend the range. While researchers from outside the community may be able to gain access to these and other such groups, I suspect that field-workers from the community will be able to work in greater depth.

Clearly East Liberty and Highland Park need a more balanced survey. I suspect there may be pockets of ethnic groups that I was not able to discover in so few interviews. In all four neighborhoods the churches provide significant nuclei of persons who have known their community over long years. And in many cases the churches are involved in the neighborhoods through outreach programs. People who work in such settings will be able to provide access to more of the human and cultural resources in their areas. As indicated earlier, while many of the specifically ethnic cultural traditions among white residents may have become diluted or dispersed as the various ethnic groups have moved away from the relatively homogeneous settlement patterns which were characteristic during the height of the steel industry, it is important to look for contemporary transformations. In the case of the African-American community, while the economic devastation of Homewood and parts of East Liberty threatens every aspect of the social fabric, a significant number of people see in traditional African-American patterns of community and cultural expression the means to restore and strengthen the sense of identity among young people. They work with persistent commitment within these neighborhoods to restore hope and cultivate opportunities for those for whom Homewood and East Liberty no longer represent the goal or the fulfillment of a dream--or even its deferment--but its mockery and delusion.

APPENDICES

PRIMARY CONTACTS - FORMAL INTERVIEWS, TAPED

ES93-JS1-C - Margaret (Peg) Albert, North Point Breeze, 8 July 1993

ES93-JS2-C - Peggy Pierce Freeman, Belmar Gardens, 8 July 1993

ES93-JS3-C - Anthony (Herb) Amen, East Liberty, 28 July 1993

ES93-JS4-C - Dorothy C. Reed, Homewood (Church of the Holy Cross, Episcopal), 14 July 1993

ES93-JS5-C - Dorothy C. Reed, continued, with tour of Church of the Holy Cross

ES93-JS6-C - Paul Brecht, East Liberty, 15 July 1993

ES93-JS7-C - Tommy Nell Taylor, North Point Breeze, 20 July 1993

ES93-JS8-C - (I seem to have misplaced this tape; am checking)

ES93-JS9-C - Rev. Hydie Houston, East Liberty, 21 July 1993

ES93-JS10-C - Pat Curran, East Liberty, 21 July 1993

ES93-JS11-C - Dr. Leon Haley, Homewood/North Point Breeze, 21 July 1993

ES93-JS12-C - Geraldine Garnett, East Liberty, 21 July 1993

ES93-JS13-C - Jesse Bolden, Upper Hill/Homewood, 23 July 1993

ES93-JS14-C - Jesse Bolden, continued

ES93-JS15-C - Barbara Rogers, North Point Breeze/Homewood/East Liberty, 23 July 1993

ES93-JS16-C - African-American Heritage Quilters Guild, 29 July 1993

ES93-JS17-C - Rev. Leroy Patrick, Homewood, 9 August 1993

ES93-JS18-C - Rev. Leroy Patrick, continued

ES93-JS19-C - Harriett Meriwether, North Point Breeze, 9 August 1993

ES93-JS20-C - Harriett Meriwether, continued

ES93-JS21-C - Tina and John Brewer, Homewood, 19 and 26 August 1993

ES93-JS22-C - Polly McQueen, South Point Breeze, 29 August 1993

ES93-JS23-C - Homewood Alive! African Arts Festival, 21 and 22 August 1993

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