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"Black San Francisco"

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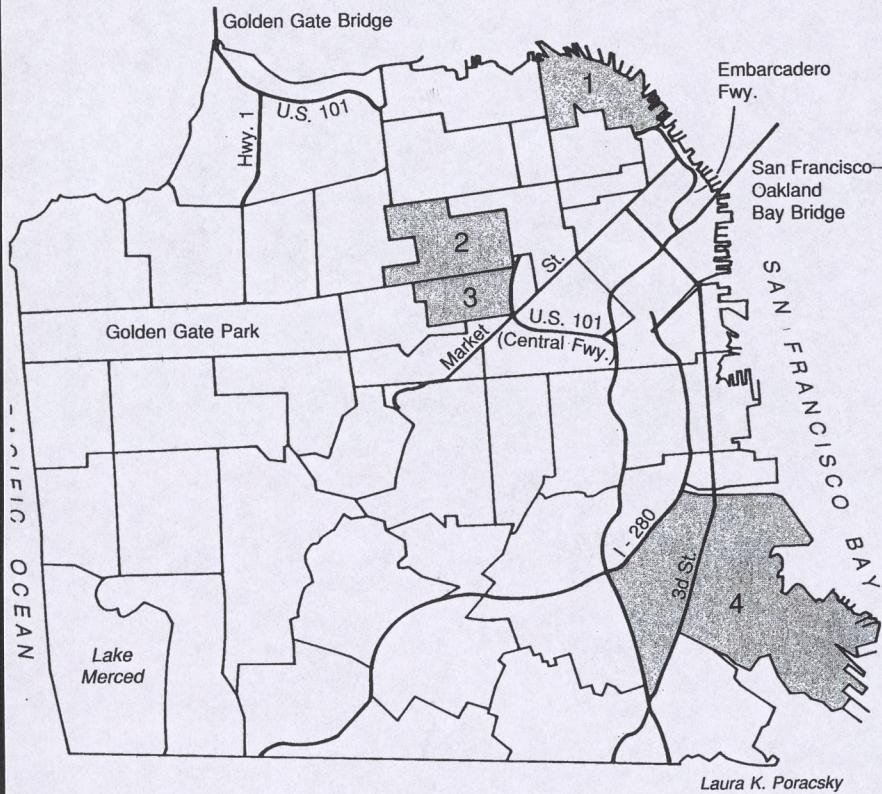
BLACK SAN FRANCISCO
The Struggle for Racial Equality in
the West, 1900-1954

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Map 1. San Francisco's Neighborhoods, 1900–1940.



KEY

1. Telegraph–North Beach
2. Western Addition
3. Hayes Valley
4. Bayview–Hunter's Point

INTRODUCTION

Within the past two decades, our understanding of black urban life has increased significantly. Books have appeared on blacks in numerous northern, southern, and border cities.¹ Despite this breadth of scholarship, the majority of which is of exceedingly high quality, the history of blacks in the twentieth-century urban West has been largely neglected. Indeed, as the historian Lawrence B. de Graaf observed in 1975, it is “the greatest vacuum in western history.” Little has been done in the past decade and a half to fill this vacuum, as scholars have concentrated on cities with large black populations and focused largely on the process of ghettoization that occurred during the era of the First World War. Thus, as Gerald D. Nash wrote in 1973, the “story of black Americans in the West [in the twentieth century] still needs to be told.”²

In this book I attempt to tell part of that story by focusing on San Francisco's black community between 1900 and 1954. San Francisco's image as a liberal and progressive city provides an opportunity to study the black experience in a western city and to compare that experience with those of black communities in northern and eastern cities. Did blacks find greater social, political, and economic opportunity in San Francisco? Were black migration patterns to western cities like San Francisco like those to midwestern and eastern cities? How did San Francisco's black leadership, protest organizations, and race relations differ from other cities? Were white racial attitudes similar in San Francisco to those in other sectors of the nation during the twentieth century? Were they similar even to the attitudes found in other western cities?³ What impact did World War I, the Great Depression, the New Deal, and World War II have on black San Franciscans? And did black San Franciscans improve their status during the post-World War II era, as their counterparts

throughout the nation were struggling for civil rights and racial equality?

These questions, to be sure, can also be raised about other West Coast cities such as Los Angeles, Oakland, Seattle, and Portland. But San Francisco represents a particularly intriguing case for many reasons. It was the "preeminent" Pacific Coast city in 1865 and maintained that distinction throughout the nineteenth century. One scholar called San Francisco the "Rome of the Pacific Coast; all roads led to it."⁴ It was the eighth largest city in the nation by 1900, containing 21 percent of the total population of California, Oregon, and Washington. San Francisco also played a pivotal role in the economic growth of the Pacific Coast. It was a center of banking and finance; its manufacturers produced 60 percent of the region's goods. San Francisco also controlled much of the coastal trade and provided a wide range of economic opportunities to its ethnically and racially diverse labor force. As William Issel and Robert W. Cherny wrote in a recent study of San Francisco, three decades after the discovery of gold San Francisco "stood virtually unchallenged as the economic capital of the Pacific Slope."⁵

San Francisco was also the leading social, cultural, political, and economic center for blacks throughout California during the nineteenth century. It contained the largest black population in the state until 1900, when it was surpassed by Los Angeles. Black San Franciscans established the state's earliest black schools, press, churches, political conventions, protest organizations, and benevolent societies. They were also the most prominent figures in the struggle for civil rights throughout the state during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶

In addition, San Francisco, rather than Oakland, Los Angeles, Portland, or Seattle, possessed a mystique as a racially tolerant and progressive city toward blacks. Few white San Franciscans admitted that any form of racial discrimination existed in their city before 1940. Former president William Howard Taft had described San Francisco, famed as an international city and renowned for its beauty around the world, as "the city that knows how," and most whites believed that this appellation applied to race relations as well. Unlike many midwestern and eastern cities, San Francisco whites did not restrict blacks to well-defined communities as they did in many cities, including Los Angeles.⁷ The majority of San Francisco's segregation laws were abolished by 1900, and blacks were permitted to frequent most places of public accommodation, ride public transportation, and attend the public schools on an integrated basis. Not one black was ever lynched in San Francisco, and there are few recorded instances of interracial violence between blacks and whites. Nor did San Francisco ever experience race riots before the 1960s, like

many northern and southern cities that exploded during the World War I era and in the early 1920s. Thus San Francisco's race relations did not conform to the rigid pattern that developed in many twentieth-century urban centers.⁸

San Francisco is an important city to study for several other reasons. Prior to the 1940s, it did not contain a large industrial black working class like Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, or Milwaukee, although the number of blacks in industrial jobs did increase steadily after 1910. Black workers were slower to gain industrial jobs in San Francisco than their counterparts in other cities, however, and the vast majority of black workers remained outside organized labor until the 1940s. San Francisco's black population also remained relatively small between 1900 and 1940, at a time when many northern and southern cities experienced sizable increases in their black communities. Thus San Francisco offers not only an opportunity to examine a relatively stable black community over four decades (1900–1940), during a period of rapid demographic changes in many black communities, but also a chance to examine a western city during a period of cataclysmic economic, social, and demographic change (1940–1954).

Many aspects of San Francisco's black community have been ignored by scholars.⁹ Douglas H. Daniels's study of black San Francisco is valuable in illustrating the struggles of blacks throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to come to grips with racial discrimination and the illusion of San Francisco as an open, egalitarian city. His book is particularly strong in describing cultural characteristics, social life, and the wide variations in black life-styles that permitted blacks to adapt to the urban milieu. The study, however, gives little attention to black leadership, racial ideologies, protest organizations, politics, and interracial societies. Nor does Daniels examine in detail the impact of the Great Depression and the New Deal, World War II, or the postwar era on San Francisco's black community.

The major focus of my study is the twentieth century, particularly the years from 1900 to 1954. The turn of the twentieth century marked much more than just a logical place to begin this study. It also signaled a new era in San Francisco's black community, which had struggled between 1850 and 1900 to gain many civil and political rights, including the right to vote, serve on juries, ride public transportation, testify in court against whites, and attend the public schools on an integrated basis. In Part One I examine patterns of black migration, family life, employment, housing, social life, politics, protest activities, and the status of blacks during the Great Depression and New Deal. During these

CR struggles

years, San Francisco's relatively small black community struggled to find decent jobs and adequate housing and to maintain their dignity. They also attempted to eliminate any racial barrier that restricted their social, economic, and political progress, through protest organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Black San Franciscans were not altogether successful in eradicating racial discrimination before 1940, for they possessed virtually no political power and could never influence most of the powerful trade unions to accept black workers. Although black workers made progress in some occupations before 1940, they lagged behind white and Asian workers in most job categories, and they were overrepresented in unskilled labor and the service sector. Here, black San Franciscans paralleled the struggles and travails of black Bostonians, who also lagged far behind both native white workers and white immigrants and made little occupational progress relative to white workers before 1940.¹⁰

The impact of World War II and the postwar era on San Francisco's black community is the subject of Part Two. The Second World War was a watershed for black San Franciscans, because it provided, for the first time, jobs in semiskilled, skilled, and white-collar occupations in sizable numbers. The war also shifted the major patterns of black and white migration from the North to the Sunbelt states. Black migration, in particular, increased dramatically throughout the entire San Francisco Bay Area, as high-paying industrial jobs became available in Bay Area shipyards and defense industries. San Francisco's black population increased more than 600 percent between 1940 and 1945 alone, as black southern migrants sought economic opportunity, better schools for their children, and freedom from racial violence. The war also accelerated the campaign for racial equality that black San Franciscans had been waging for more than four decades. As black leaders joined with white leaders to form interracial organizations, racial discrimination was under greater assault than ever before, and by 1954, blacks faced fewer barriers in their quest for full equality. I concluded my study in 1954, because blacks throughout California and the nation would push even more vigorously for civil rights and racial equality during the mid-1950s and 1960s. Thus the period after 1954, which some scholars have called the "Second Reconstruction," launched a new era in San Francisco's racial history and is beyond the scope of this study.

My research on San Francisco's black community and on other black urban communities in the West reveals that western black communities developed differently in some respects from those in the East and Midwest. Before 1940, one of the characteristics that set black communities

in the West apart from those in other regions was their relatively small size. With the exception of Los Angeles, which had a black population of 63,774 in 1940, black urban communities along the Pacific coast and in the interior grew at a much slower rate than those in the North.¹¹ Migrating to a West Coast city like San Francisco was more difficult because of the distance and the expense, but many blacks also considered it impractical because fewer industrial jobs were available there. And although blacks in some midwestern cities were organized by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) during the 1930s and 1940s to work in the automobile industry, most black westerners were excluded from organized labor until after World War II. Only as longshoremen were numbers of black San Franciscans welcomed on an integrated basis and permitted to join a white union.¹²

Another characteristic that distinguished San Francisco and most western black communities was the absence of black ghettos before World War II. True, Los Angeles had formed a black ghetto as early as 1930, but Los Angeles was exceptional because it contained nearly as many blacks as every other western city combined. No black ghetto developed before 1940 in San Francisco, Oakland, Portland, or Seattle. Blacks in these cities generally lived in integrated neighborhoods and attended integrated schools, although small black enclaves had developed in some cities before their black communities became sizable. The process of ghettoization that developed in eastern and midwestern cities between 1916 and 1920 was delayed between twenty-five and thirty years in western cities like San Francisco.¹³

San Francisco, Seattle, and Los Angeles, unlike midwestern and eastern urban centers, also had large communities of Asians, particularly Chinese and Japanese. San Francisco, in fact, had the largest Chinese community in the nation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the nineteenth century, black and Chinese migrants arrived in San Francisco at roughly the same time, lived in proximity to one another, shared similar aspirations to better their economic and social position, and occasionally even shared the same recreation facilities. Yet San Francisco's Chinese community was more than ten times larger than its black population in some years and constituted a significant percentage of the city's labor force. Elsewhere I have compared some aspects of the black and Chinese communities in San Francisco, including migration patterns, employment, housing, education, and white attitudes toward both groups, as Quintard Taylor has done for the black and Japanese communities in Seattle.¹⁴ The Chinese, despite also being portrayed by whites as an undesirable and inferior race, made significantly

Asians

more progress than blacks in employment and dominated some occupations, such as laundry work and cigarmaking, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet they lagged behind blacks in education, housing, and health care and were occasionally the targets of mob violence. In this respect, the Chinese served as a buffer between the white and black communities, for they, rather than blacks, were perceived by white workers as a threat to their wages and working conditions.¹⁵

In this book I also explore the impact of the Great Depression and the New Deal, World War II, and the postwar era on San Francisco's black community. Only two studies of urban black communities, Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945*, and Darrel E. Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial: A History of the Black Community of Evansville, Indiana*, evaluate the impact of the Great Depression, New Deal, and Second World War on blacks.¹⁶ No scholar has examined the postwar era and its impact on a black urban community to date, although Arnold R. Hirsch's *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* explores the black struggle for decent housing in a northern metropolis between 1940 and 1960, and Nicholas Lemann's *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* examines how the migration of southern rural black migrants from Clarksdale, Mississippi, to Chicago during the 1940s and 1950s affected family relations, housing patterns, employment, and race relations in a northern city.¹⁷ My research supports Gerald D. Nash's conclusion that World War II had a "transforming effect" on race relations in the West¹⁸ and shows that an active civil rights movement existed in San Francisco during the 1940s and 1950s, the product of a committed interracial leadership and a new black leadership class that had migrated to San Francisco during World War II.

Black San Francisco, then, is about how blacks attempted to gain social, political, and economic equality in a western city with a progressive image, few segregation laws, and a liberal reputation. Despite the small size of San Francisco's black population between 1900 and 1940 and the nominal economic competition between black and white workers, most whites perceived blacks as an inferior racial caste and restricted their progress socially, politically, and economically. Although black San Franciscans fought to eradicate these attitudes between 1900 and 1940, largely through protest organizations and the black press, they did not have the power to significantly alter their status. As the black population increased dramatically between 1940 and 1954, white prejudices became even more virulent. During the 1940s and 1950s, many blacks still found it difficult to rent or purchase decent housing in integrated communities

and to find employment other than unskilled, menial jobs. This racial caste system dictated, as David M. Katzman showed in his study of Detroit's black community, that blacks and whites, irrespective of class or qualifications, rarely interacted on an equal footing. This was true both socially and politically but was especially evident in the employment sector. Black San Franciscans were generally denied access to trade unions before 1945 and barred from many skilled, white-collar, and professional jobs. Black women fared even worse. In San Francisco and most of the West, black women were overwhelmingly relegated to domestic and personal service jobs or "black women's work."¹⁹

Understanding the texture of this racial caste system is critical to understanding why blacks made so little progress in areas like employment and housing, despite the absence of segregation laws. Many whites resented the presence of blacks unless they occupied subservient or menial roles. Yet white San Franciscans were also conscious of San Francisco's national image as a tolerant and progressive city, and some worked diligently to maintain that reputation. Most whites were civil in their contacts with blacks, irrespective of their personal prejudices, and displayed what one historian has called "polite racism." Yet civility only masked the antipathy, disdain, and hostility that many whites felt toward black San Franciscans. So although I agree with the contention of historian William H. Chafe that "civility is the cornerstone of the progressive mystique, signifying courtesy, concern about an associate's family, children, and health, a personal grace that smooths contact with strangers and obscures conflict with foes," I believe that the racial caste model adopted by David Katzman has far greater applicability to San Francisco.²⁰

On the eve of the historic *Brown v. the Board of Education, Topeka* decision in 1954, which outlawed segregation in public schools, blacks still faced many of the same problems they had confronted more than a decade earlier. To be sure, progress had been made in many areas, but black San Franciscans continued to be excluded from many areas of employment because of their race, and they occupied some of San Francisco's worst housing. In spite of San Francisco's civility and its liberal reputation, racial discrimination and the white perception that blacks constituted an inferior racial caste limited black progress and advancement in many areas. Thus W. E. B. Du Bois's prophecy that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" also included a "politely racist" western city like San Francisco.²¹

PART ONE

THE EVOLUTION AND SHAPING
OF SAN FRANCISCO'S
BLACK COMMUNITY, 1900-1940

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
OF SAN FRANCISCO'S BLACK
COMMUNITY, 1900-1930

Few American cities had undergone the rapid demographic and economic transformations that San Francisco experienced during the nineteenth century. By 1900, San Francisco had become the leading West Coast metropolis and one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation. The discovery of gold at Sutter's Fort in 1848 had sparked an international movement of fortune seekers to northern California, and San Francisco's population grew at an astonishing rate for the next three decades.¹ In 1848, San Francisco recorded a population of only 1,000 people. Four years later the city's population had swelled to 30,000, and in 1860, 56,803 people resided in this once tiny hamlet—an increase of 89 percent from the 1850 census.² This rate of growth is impressive by any standard; it is even more remarkable when measured by the standards of East Coast cities like New York and Philadelphia, which took nearly two centuries to achieve this rate of growth. "Despite its inauspicious location," wrote Roger W. Lotchin, "a great city had grown up on the north end of San Francisco Peninsula."³

San Francisco's growth was equally impressive between 1860 and 1900. In 1870 its population had grown to 149,473, an increase of 163 percent from the previous census. And although San Francisco's population growth had slowed to 57 percent between 1870 and 1880 and 28 percent between 1880 and 1890, these were nonetheless significant increases. By 1900, 342,782 people lived in San Francisco, making it the largest city on the West Coast.⁴

San Francisco's rapid population growth was accompanied by a parallel boom in business and economic development, and by 1880 San Francisco led the entire West Coast as a center of finance. "The city had more manufacturing establishments, more employees in workshops, greater

capitalization, larger value of materials, and higher value of products than all the other twenty-four western cities combined." San Francisco's foreign imports ranked fourth in the nation in 1890, trailing only those of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Equally impressive was San Francisco's export trade, which ranked fifth in the nation and was fueled largely by the shipping of wheat and flour.⁵

Manufacturing grew rapidly in San Francisco during these years, and by 1880 the city had the most broadly based, diversified manufacturing sector in the state. The value of San Francisco's manufactured goods had risen to \$118 million by 1890, an increase of \$81 million dollars in the space of two decades. Although the majority of employers hired fewer than five employees in 1880, both small and large companies grew rapidly during the decade, producing a variety of goods, including foodstuffs, cigars, clothing, textiles, lumber, and leather goods. San Francisco's food-processing industry alone earned \$50 million dollars in 1890, and the sugar-refining industry, largely under the domination of Claus Spreckels, emerged as one of the largest sugar refineries in the nation. This industry earned \$17 million in 1890, making it the dominant manufacturing industry in San Francisco and in the western region.⁶

In the wake of the gold rush, the city had no shortage of banks, and several of these institutions, such as the Nevada Bank and the Bank of California, also brought large profits from Nevada silver to San Francisco. This capital stimulated the growth of commerce, industry, and real estate development. The Nevada Bank, located at Montgomery and Pine streets, was capitalized at \$10 million and had over \$20 million in additional reserves. Prominent bankers, such as James Phelan and Charles Croker, were among San Francisco's economic elite during the late nineteenth century. They shaped the city's economic life for more than five decades⁷ and, along with their fellow bankers and industrialists, organized and led some of the most important financial institutions in San Francisco. They also invested heavily in numerous local and state enterprises, including insurance, shipping, railroad, real estate, and utility companies. By virtue of their economic influence they also dominated the political arena in San Francisco throughout the nineteenth century.⁸

As in many American cities, San Francisco's economic elite also served as the city's social and cultural leaders. Former San Francisco Mayor James Phelan, for example, served as president of the San Francisco Art Association, the Pacific Union Club, and the Bohemian Club, and the membership of these organizations read like the city's social register. Phelan used his influence in social, political, and economic circles to

bring the City Beautiful movement to San Francisco. Under the auspices of the Association for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco, Phelan commissioned Daniel H. Burnham, recognized as the leading city planner in the nation, to provide a comprehensive design for an "Imperial San Francisco" that would rival the great cities of the world. Although the Burnham Plan was never adopted, it illustrated the influence that San Francisco's economic elite had in cultural affairs.⁹

The rise and proliferation of labor unions between 1849 and 1890 was a significant factor in San Francisco's economic growth and contributed, in large measure, to the relatively high wages workers received. Labor agitation was a conspicuous feature of San Francisco's history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as labor unions used the favorable business climate to press for higher wages and better working conditions.¹⁰ Some of these early unions, such as the Trades Assembly, the Knights of Labor, and the International Workingman's Association, enjoyed limited success but were short-lived. Others, such as the San Francisco Labor Council, established in 1891, and the Building Trades Council (BTC), created in 1896, were extremely influential and a boon to organized labor. The BTC "became perhaps the most powerful labor organization in the country."¹¹ Because of its domination of San Francisco's construction industry, the BTC could require union membership as a prerequisite for employment. The BTC's reliance on the closed shop gave it tremendous leverage in negotiating wages and working conditions. Moreover, its organizational structure, which consisted of autonomous locals of different trades that were affiliated with national unions, ensured that "undesirable" workers such as blacks and Asians would not easily obtain membership.¹² Consequently, black San Franciscans, as well as their Asian counterparts, remained virtually excluded from organized labor until after World War II.¹³

While most San Franciscans believed that ample opportunity to excel existed throughout the nineteenth century, social mobility had slowed considerably by 1880. As Peter R. Decker showed in his study of white-collar mobility in nineteenth-century San Francisco, "class social boundaries were more closely drawn" by the 1880s, and it had become increasingly difficult for blue-collar workers to rise into white-collar occupations. Only 5 percent of the 1880 elite, for example, "had worn a blue collar in their first San Francisco job, a smaller group than the 16 percent of the first merchant generation (the elite of the 1850s) who emerged from the ranks of workingmen," Decker noted.¹⁴ The average worker found that opportunities to move up the occupational ladder were more rather than less restricted as time progressed, and San Francisco's social structure

began to replicate that of many northern and eastern cities during the late nineteenth century. Fortunes could still be made and white-collar mobility was a conspicuous feature of the middle class, but San Francisco's social structure was not as open or fluid as it had been during the city's formative decades. Most occupational mobility was limited to the white-collar sector by 1880, and this new elite dominated San Francisco economically and politically well into the twentieth century.¹⁵

Blacks

Against this backdrop of a city that had grown from a commercial village to an urban metropolis in the space of a few decades stood a small black community that aspired to improve its social, political, and economic status. For black leaders like Peter Cole, who delivered an address in 1865 before the black state convention in Sacramento, California was the site where "the work of black liberation was destined to begin."¹⁶ These early black migrants were as optimistic as white immigrants that San Francisco offered them a fresh start, hope, and myriad economic opportunities. One black migrant was so impressed with San Francisco's economic promise that he called the city the "New York of the Pacific."¹⁷ Indeed, work was plentiful during the city's formative years. A few black migrants ran small businesses or were employed as artisans or semi-skilled workers, but the majority did not fare so well. Eighty percent worked in unskilled, service-oriented positions in 1860. Several luxury hotels, such as the Palace Hotel, employed black work crews, and 20 percent of black workers were employed as cooks. Most black working women were employed in domestic service, a pattern they would not break until World War II.

Despite restricted employment opportunities, a minuscule number of black San Franciscans, such as Mifflin W. Gibbs, however, were relatively successful. Born a free black in Philadelphia in 1823, Gibbs was lured to San Francisco by gold. He found employment as a carpenter, but was dismissed after white employees threatened to strike rather than tolerate a black co-worker. Although he was discouraged by this experience, Gibbs went on to establish a small business, the Pioneer Boot and Shoe Emporium, which specialized in the sale of "fine boots and shoes." According to Gibbs, "The business, wholesale and retail, was profitable and maintained for a number of years."¹⁸ Gibbs's success as a black merchant was unusual: he was one of only three blacks listed among 3,100 merchants in the 1852 census for San Francisco. Gibbs acknowledged that he was an exception and that most blacks worked "in the lower and less remunerative pursuits."¹⁹ With the rise of white unions in

Chinese

the service trades during the 1880s and the continuing competition with Chinese workers, who outnumbered blacks significantly during the nineteenth century, black workers were challenged and displaced, even in unskilled positions.²⁰

The earliest black migrants also discovered that San Francisco's racial patterns, though never as rigid or oppressive as the conditions black Southerners endured, were similar to those in many northern and western cities. They also found that they were denied many civil and political rights. San Francisco's small black population, which grew from less than five hundred in 1852 to 1,847 in 1890, struggled to gain the vote, to attend integrated schools, to testify in court in cases involving whites, and to use public accommodations on an equal basis.²¹ True, these types of racial restrictions characterized most western cities during the nineteenth century, as well as northern and midwestern urban centers such as Cleveland, Detroit, and Evansville, Indiana. But black migrants had hoped San Francisco would become a more open and egalitarian society. Instead, the world of black San Franciscans contrasted sharply with that of their white counterparts, who did not have to wage a protracted struggle to gain civil and political rights, to attend integrated schools, to ride public transportation, and to join labor unions on an equal basis. The experience of blacks resembled more closely the plight of the Chinese, who also fought for political and civil rights, and who were often the targets of mob violence by white workers. Thus, even though life may have been difficult for the majority of nineteenth-century San Franciscans and particularly harsh for some groups such as the Irish and the Chinese, the attitude of most whites toward blacks was one of contempt throughout the nineteenth century. As Lotchin concluded, "San Franciscans shared the general white American prejudice against Negroes."²² White San Franciscans were reluctant integrationists, and they did not extend equal rights to blacks until they were pressed to do so. In his study of Detroit's black community, David Katzman observed that whites perceived blacks as an inferior caste unfit to interact with them under most circumstances. White San Franciscans, in many instances, shared these views. The term "caste" seems appropriate to explain whites' antipathy and contempt toward blacks of all social and economic classes. These attitudes contrasted sharply with San Francisco's image as a liberal and racially progressive city. The incongruity of the small black caste struggling for dignity and civil rights in the midst of an avowed liberal and racially tolerant white community would characterize San Francisco's race relations throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²³

Chinese

Blacks responded to economic restrictions and racial inequality in a number of ways. Some migrated to other California cities, such as Oakland or Los Angeles. Others returned to their home states. The *San Francisco Elevator*, a black newspaper, wrote in 1868 that the "tide of travel [to San Francisco] is reversed. Our representative men are leaving us, going East, some never to return. California does not hold out sufficient inducements for able colored men to come here and waste their time and bury their talents where they are not appreciated."²⁴ Limited employment opportunities created a class of idle blacks who frequented street corners and occasionally proved to be public nuisances. A black barber complained about the "great number of idle Negroes lounging around the bootstands, discussing politics; often drunkenness, profanity and quarreling among them is a great detriment to my business and disgusting to the public."²⁵

Although black leaders knew that racial discrimination was in part responsible for the diminished employment opportunities available in San Francisco, they also argued that unless more blacks learned trades, the race would never overcome its lowly occupational status. The *Pacific Appeal*, a black weekly, asked its readers, "How can you ever expect to occupy any other position, than that of menials, if you educate your children for no others?" Trades, the paper argued, would make blacks "independent of the whitewash brush and the shop bucket." Similarly, black editor Philip A. Bell believed that the succeeding generation should strive to be more than "waiters, bootblacks, white-washers, and barbers." As late as 1890, the black press continued to extol the virtues of learning trades as an important precondition for social mobility and economic progress. Yet blacks made only marginal progress in skilled and semi-skilled jobs before the 1940s.²⁶

The vast majority of black San Franciscans chose not to leave for other cities. Instead, like the thousands of white ethnic immigrants who preceded them to the Bay Area, they remained and strove to improve their status. Much of their struggle would be channeled through an array of committees, protest organizations, and institutions (such as churches, lodges, literary societies, political leagues, and black newspapers) established between 1850 and 1870. Thus organized black protest was an integral part of San Francisco's heritage. As early as 1851, black leaders, led by Mifflin Gibbs and J. H. Townsend, printed a list of resolutions in the *Alta California* protesting the denial of the franchise and the right of blacks to testify in court cases involving whites. The right of testimony and the franchise, both integral parts of the democratic process, were two of the most important issues for black leaders. Jeremiah Burke Sander-

son, a black minister and activist, wrote that the denial of the right to testify was the catalyst for the 1855 black state convention, in which black San Franciscans played a pivotal role. Blacks also associated the testimony right with the right of self-defense. The *Pacific Appeal* wrote that the denial of the right to testify against whites would leave the black populace in an untenable position, "victims of every lawless ruffian who chose to murder, rob and oppress us." It described the restrictions as "relics of barbarism and slavery," and lobbied to remove them. Black leaders also conducted petition drives, which were supported by some whites throughout the state, but twelve years transpired before the state legislature granted blacks the right to testify against whites in 1863.²⁷

Black San Franciscans, like their counterparts in Cleveland and New York, also struggled during the 1850s and 1860s to gain the franchise. Black suffrage associations were established in San Francisco as early as 1852, when the Franchise League was founded, although the campaign to obtain the vote did not intensify until the 1860s. Philip A. Bell, the editor of the *San Francisco Elevator*, a weekly black newspaper, provided the spark and impetus behind the drive. "Let the entire state be canvassed," Bell wrote in 1865. Realizing the role that public opinion would play in this campaign, Bell continued, "It is not legislation alone to whom we must look to extend us that right. We must educate the people." Bell also maintained that black voters would be as sophisticated in their use of the franchise as white voters and that it would not "require a generation to educate them [blacks] to an intelligent use of the ballot," as some critics had charged.²⁸

Black San Franciscans formally petitioned the state legislature in 1867, two years after that body had defeated an 1865 amendment to repeal the racially restrictive franchise law. Once again, however, the legislature ignored the pressure by black leaders to grant them the right to vote. Thus blacks were unable to vote in California until the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1869.²⁹

The issue of integrated education was also as volatile in San Francisco as in most northern communities. Although California's earliest school laws made no specific mention of race, black children were required to attend segregated schools as early as 1854. Black leaders made impromptu inspections of the Jim Crow school, located near the corner of Jackson and Virginia streets, and often found the conditions deplorable. Housed in the basement of a black church, the colored school was "dark, damp, with only one small yard as a playground."³⁰

Black parents also protested the Jim Crow school's location. They argued that their children were forced to walk several miles to school,

CK struggle

① right of testimony

mention segregation of Chinese and Japanese (1906)

1855

②
J. H. Townsend
Franchise
League

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X
integrated
Education

often in poor weather, and that this had an adverse effect on black attendance. Indeed, by the late 1860s, a higher proportion of blacks than whites failed to attend school. Between 1869 and 1870, 145 black children were enrolled in school, but the average daily attendance was seventy-six pupils. Since most black parents could not afford to send their children to private schools, and since Catholic schools were also expensive and discriminated on the basis of race, many black children simply stayed home. The precise number of black children who did not attend the colored school cannot be determined. However, during the 1859-1860 school year, one hundred black students were enrolled in the colored school, but the average daily attendance was only thirty-nine students.³¹

As in their earlier struggles for the right to testify and the right to vote, black San Franciscans used the meager resources within their community to protest segregated schools for black children. Indeed, the school issue dominated the black press in the 1870s, and the concern by local blacks was echoed statewide. "The proper education of our children is paramount to all other considerations," wrote the *Pacific Appeal*. Black leaders organized a district educational convention in Stockton in 1871 to discuss this issue and devise a strategy, and the 1873 California black state convention passed several resolutions denouncing segregated schools.³²

Black San Franciscans finally appealed to the courts. In 1872, the parents of Mary Frances Ward sued Noah Flood, the principal of the Broadway Grammar School, and the San Francisco school district when their daughter was refused admission because of her race. John W. Dwinelle, a prominent white local attorney, agreed to serve as Ward's counsel and to test the legality of the de facto policy that prohibited black children from attending school with white children. Dwinelle argued that the existing school code violated the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments and the Civil Rights Act of 1866. Even though he knew that two bills designed to admit black children to the public schools had been defeated by the legislature in 1872, Dwinelle was optimistic that the state supreme court would rule in his client's favor. Less than two years after the case had been filed, the California State Supreme Court ruled that unless separate schools for blacks were maintained, blacks could not be legally excluded from white schools. This decision "established the principle of 'separate but equal' in California law—twenty-two years before the United States Supreme Court adopted it in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*." Black leaders called the decision a compromise, rather than a victory, for it avoided the real question of equality before the law. The "old barn, called a colored school stands upon Russian Hill with no more

"Separate but equal"

additional improvements or facilities than before the decision was given," wrote the *Pacific Appeal*. The San Francisco Board of Education finally voted to end segregated public schools for blacks in 1875, after a committee of the board "recommended that 'colored children' be allowed to attend any public school and that separate schools be abolished."³³

The board's decision to abolish segregated schools was the result of public pressure by local leaders, both black and white, and a declining economy. San Francisco's black leadership had pushed for the abolition of the Jim Crow school for two decades without success, but their struggle drew attention to the colored school's deplorable condition. Several influential whites, including John W. Dwinelle and J. F. Cowdery of San Francisco, a local assemblyman, opposed the Jim Crow school. The state's declining economy during the 1870s also contributed to the board's decision. The city's colored school was more expensive to operate on a per pupil basis than were the larger white institutions, according to Charles Wollenberg, and many voters balked at paying taxes to support it during a depression. The expediency of the board's decision was not lost on the *Pacific Appeal*, which wrote that board members favored ending the Jim Crow school because of "retrenchment and economy rather than a really spontaneous desire at this time to do justice to colored children." Regardless of whether the board's motivation was ideological or merely pragmatic, this was an important decision. It signaled the crumbling of another caste barrier in San Francisco. Five years later, segregated school facilities for blacks were outlawed throughout California.³⁴

Black San Franciscans were generally permitted access to public accommodations, but they were occasionally barred from public transportation and restricted in certain establishments. One proprietor reported that a Negro was free to patronize his tavern, "provided he did not come too often." At least four blacks filed suit against public transportation companies in San Francisco and collected damages, an indication that this problem was more widespread during the 1860s than many people believed.³⁵ After 1867, blacks apparently rode local transportation without harassment, but were not as fortunate in other areas. Charles Green, a twenty-four-year-old black man, sued T. R. Jackson in 1876 after he was denied access to the dress circle during a performance of the Jubilee Singers. Jackson, who managed Maguire's New Theatre, a popular local establishment, was acquitted in the U. S. Circuit Court, on the grounds that the owner of a private establishment had the right to determine his own procedure for seating. Green appealed the decision but lost his appeal. As historian Roger W. Lotchin concluded about San Francisco's race relations, "the hostility was always ambiguous, and respect

④
Public accommodations Jackson

and support coexisted with antipathy." So although blacks were allowed to frequent most restaurants and theaters, albeit in restricted seating areas, they could not attend San Francisco's public baths and were required to sit in the balcony in some theaters. Thus caste barriers were eradicated in education, voting, and the right to testify in court by the 1870s, but they remained intact in other areas, such as public accommodations.³⁶

The difference in black access to education and transportation, on the one hand, and to places of public accommodation, on the other, was a matter of degree. True, blacks did not have to wage extensive public or legal campaigns in order to frequent public establishments, but then black patrons had more alternatives in selecting places of public accommodation than they did in choosing schools and transportation. When black patrons received poor service or were offended by racial slurs at one restaurant or tavern, they simply chose another establishment where they felt more comfortable. When it came to schools or local transportation, however, their options were few and the stakes were higher, which may explain why blacks chose to wage more intensive campaigns in these areas.

By 1900, San Francisco's small but cohesive black community had made significant progress in breaking down the racial caste system in many areas. Black leaders had secured a number of rights: the right to vote, to attend integrated schools, to ride public transportation, to testify against whites, and to frequent most public accommodations. Moreover, blacks could live anywhere they could afford to live. These were impressive achievements for a black community that did not reach 2,000 during the nineteenth century and was never more than one percent of the city's total population. Black leaders were less successful, however, in opening up employment opportunities for black workers and breaking down discriminatory barriers in white trade unions. In fact, by the closing decades of the nineteenth century, black San Franciscans began to lose ground, even in the service trades, as emerging white trade unions barred black workers.³⁷ The limitations on black advancement in these areas would carry over into the twentieth century. Yet black San Franciscans never gave up. They had not forgotten that conditions were much worse when the first black migrants arrived during the 1850s, but they also realized that they could not rely solely on white San Franciscans to set the agenda for racial progress. Like their counterparts in other northern and southern cities, local black leaders advocated self-help, racial solidarity, business enterprise, and the efforts of their own community

⑤ Employment - no progress

institutions to bring about change and to mold San Francisco into a racially progressive city.

San Francisco's blacks had established patterns and characteristics by 1900 that shaped the black community for several decades and distinguished it, in some respects, from black communities in other parts of the nation. The small size of the black population, which had grown slowly throughout the nineteenth century, was one of San Francisco's most striking features. Like most far western cities, San Francisco contained only a nominal percentage of blacks by 1900 and never approached the percentage that characterized northern industrial centers like Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, or northeastern cities like New York and Boston. Excluded from labor unions and most skilled occupations throughout the Bay Area, blacks struggled and scratched to make a living. It is hardly surprising that San Francisco's black community never exceeded one percent of the city's total population. This was in stark contrast to San Francisco's large Chinese population, which had grown to almost 14,000 by the turn of the century and comprised the largest racial minority group in San Francisco. The Chinese community was eight times larger than the black population in 1900, and its work force had attained a greater foothold than blacks in industrial and skilled jobs. But if blacks faced restrictions in some areas compared to the Chinese, they also enjoyed some advantages. Because San Francisco had integrated its public schools in 1875, virtually the entire black community was literate by 1930. Finally, San Francisco was relatively free of the violence and racial harassment that blacks faced in other parts of the nation, although these problems did afflict the much larger Chinese population.³⁸

Blacks were not attracted to San Francisco in large numbers between 1900 and 1940, because of limited economic opportunities and competition with other nonwhite groups for unskilled jobs. Furthermore, the distance of San Francisco from the South made it more difficult city to migrate to than many northern or midwestern cities. Only 1,654 blacks lived in San Francisco at the turn of the century, a decline of 10.4 percent from the previous census. Some of these individuals probably moved to Oakland, which almost doubled its black population between 1890 and 1900 and was considered more hospitable to blacks seeking industrial employment. A decade later, San Francisco's black community experienced another population decline, reporting 1,642 residents, twelve fewer than the previous census. Although it was no precipitous skid, the

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decline indicated that San Francisco was not a magnet for black migrants even though black populations in many other western and northern cities were growing. Oakland, for example, almost tripled its black population between 1900 and 1910, as more black migrants and some black San Franciscans selected San Francisco's east bay rival as their preferred residence. In 1920, San Francisco's black population recorded its first growth since 1890, when it reached 2,414. In 1930, the black population of San Francisco reached 3,803, approximately one-tenth the size of Los Angeles' black population, and half the size of Oakland's. On the eve of World War II, 4,806 blacks lived in San Francisco out of a total population of 634,536.³⁹

Although the black community of San Francisco is small when measured against those of northern urban centers, it increased over two successive decades. This increase is important, because it reveals that San Francisco's black population was not static between 1910 and 1940. In fact, in some respects, its growth was impressive. Although the number of blacks who migrated to San Francisco was not as great as the number that migrated elsewhere, the black population of San Francisco increased 131 percent between 1910 and 1930, and 193 percent between 1910 and 1940. These gains would be impressive for any black urban population, and they indicate that San Francisco did offer some economic inducements to black migrants between 1910 and 1940. This growth also reveals that many blacks began to perceive San Francisco differently after 1910. As fewer employment restrictions hampered black workers, more were willing to make the long westward trek.⁴⁰

The distance between the West Coast and many southern rural communities probably discouraged blacks from migrating to San Francisco and neighboring cities during the Great Migration and the 1920s. The vast majority of these migrants were southern rural blacks, who migrated to northern and midwestern cities primarily in search of better-paying jobs. Rail and water transportation to northern cities was not cheap, but through ingenuity, frugality, and the occasional assistance of white industrialists, many impoverished blacks obtained enough money to make the trip. San Francisco, however, was almost twice as far from Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi as most northern industrial cities. The trip was not only longer, but also less direct and more expensive, as regular railroad passage was computed per mile. Moreover, it was unlikely that many southern migrants had either friends or relatives in San Francisco, given the small size of its black community. Thus the vital network of friends and family members that propelled so many southern blacks northward was not a significant factor in San Francisco's black com-

munity before World War II. Similarly, there is no evidence that railroads attempted to lure southern black migrants to western cities as cheap laborers before World War II, for Bay Area industrialists did not experience the critical labor shortage that their counterparts faced in the North. Nor did San Francisco contain a militant black newspaper comparable to the *Chicago Defender*, which urged blacks to leave the South and migrate North. Hence, many black southern migrants probably never considered going to San Francisco, viewing such a move as difficult, impractical, and undesirable, given the paucity of industrial jobs.⁴¹

The impact of the 1906 earthquake and fire also had a devastating effect on the city's black community and retarded its population growth. Many of the residential hotels and apartments that black workers occupied in the central district (south of Market Street and near the Embarcadero) were destroyed. Once the city lay in virtual ruins, housing of any type became difficult to find, and the lowly economic status of blacks made their search even more difficult.⁴² Restricted economic opportunity, however, was the major factor explaining the slower growth of San Francisco's black community relative to other cities before World War II. Unlike northern industrial cities, which experienced substantial increases in their black populations during the Great Migration (1916-1919), San Francisco's black population grew at a rate of 47 percent between 1910 and 1920, when it added approximately 800 black residents. True, this number seems insignificant in comparison with the 65,355 blacks who migrated to Chicago between 1910 and 1920; however, it is comparable to the 2.0 percent increase in Evansville, Indiana's black community between 1910 and 1920. Moreover, San Francisco's black population in 1920 was slightly larger than that of some industrial cities, such as Milwaukee,⁴³ yet San Francisco offered fewer high-paying industrial jobs to southern black migrants. Black migrants were generally attracted to cities that were more oriented toward manufacturing, which explains in part the attraction of both Oakland and Los Angeles, whose black communities grew at a much faster rate than San Francisco's after 1910. These two cities also offered a warmer climate and the opportunity for more blacks to become homeowners. However, the fact that San Francisco provided limited opportunities for black workers in industry and manufacturing proved the most significant reason explaining its small black population.⁴⁴

As blacks settled in San Francisco, they attempted to form stable, two-parent families and, to a large extent, they succeeded.⁴⁵ Indeed, by 1900, 81.9 percent of black households were headed by men. Black women headed only 18 percent of all households, and three-fourths of these

Table 1.1. Black Population in San Francisco, Oakland and Los Angeles, 1900-1950

Year	San Francisco	Oakland	Los Angeles
1900	1,654	1,026	2,131
1910	1,642	3,055	7,599
1920	2,414	5,489	15,579
1930	3,803	7,503	38,894
1940	4,806	8,462	63,774
1945	32,001	37,327	133,082
1950	43,460	47,562	171,209

Source: United States Bureau of the Census, *Population, 1900-1950: Special Census of San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Angeles*, United States Bureau of the Census, 1945 and 1946.

women were widowed. Although the number of male heads of households had declined to 74.5 percent by 1930, these figures illustrated a high degree of family stability and were similar to the high percentage of male-headed black families that historian Herbert Gutman found in New York.⁴⁶

San Francisco's black families were also smaller than white families. Nearly a third of black families in 1900 had no children and 22 percent had only one child. By 1930, the median size of black families was only 1.98, compared with a median of 2.85 for foreign-born white families and 2.39 for native white families.⁴⁷ Approximately a third of all black families in 1930 consisted of a single person. Another third had only two members. Families with three members composed only 14.5 percent of black family units, and black households with four or more members constituted 16.5 percent of black households.⁴⁸ White families, in contrast, were slightly larger than black households. Only 17.9 percent of native white families and 14.9 percent of foreign-born white families contained only one family member in 1930. Two-person families made up 35.9 percent of all native white households, similar to the black percentage. Foreign-born whites also had larger families than blacks; two-person families were 25.5 percent of the total. The percentage of families with three or more members was also larger among both native whites and foreign-born whites than among blacks.⁴⁹

The large percentage of one-person black families in 1930 marked a sharp break with the figures of earlier years and reflected, in part, an influx of single males between 1910 and 1930. The black population increased 131 percent during these two decades, and many of these migrants apparently settled in San Francisco as single family units. The reasons for black San Franciscan's reluctance to have children cannot be

ascertained easily. Hardly a youthful population, 90 percent of black residents were at least twenty-five years old by 1930. The median age for blacks was higher than for native whites, but significantly lower than for foreign-born whites. Since foreign-born whites possessed the largest median family size of all groups, age was not apparently the most serious obstacle in having children, as Lawrence B. de Graaf speculated about black women in the West. The decision to have small families or no children at all cut across the entire spectrum of black society and was not limited to one social class or economic group. Often members of the black working class, such as Alfred Butler, as well as members of the black middle class, such as Katherine Stewart Flippin, chose not to have children. This preference was also evident in other urban communities throughout the West. It reflected the beliefs of many black westerners that their tenuous position in the labor market and the resulting economic hardships made the prospect of large families undesirable.⁵⁰

As in many northern cities and throughout the West, the ratio of males-to-females was disproportionate in the San Francisco black community. Black men had migrated to San Francisco since the 1849 Gold Rush, expecting to improve their economic status. Many eventually sent for their families, but there was still a shortage of black women to date or marry. Although this problem was not unique to blacks, it was exacerbated by the strict social and legal etiquette governing interracial dating and marriages. Black men were less likely to marry than either native whites or foreign-born whites, which explains, in part, the relatively small number of children in the city's black population. The black male-to-female ratio remained imbalanced in San Francisco until 1940, when it became virtually equal. A larger number of single black females migrated to San Francisco between 1920 and 1940, and fewer single black males migrated to San Francisco during the 1930s, a reflection of the economic hardships that blacks faced during the Great Depression. Not until 1945, with the large influx of black migrants to San Francisco, did black females outnumber black males.⁵¹

Table 1.2. Males per 100 Females by Race, San Francisco, 1910-1950

	Negroes	Native whites	Foreign-born whites
1910	166.1	125.8	162.4
1920	129.5	113.9	114.8
1930	135.8	109.5	138.7
1940	103.2	94.9	122.4
1950	94.9	96.6	108.4

Source: United States censuses, 1910-1950.

Table 1.3. Illiteracy by Race, San Francisco, 1910-1930 (in percentage)

	Negro	Native white	Foreign-born white
1910	5.2	0.2	4.7
1920	3.1	0.2	4.8
1930	1.6	0.2	3.7

Source: United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Reports by States*, vol. 3, pt. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 69.

Education

If black San Franciscans placed a high premium on family stability, they placed an equally high value on education. Accordingly, blacks took advantage of San Francisco's commitment to eliminate illiteracy and to educate its entire school age population. The black illiteracy rate in San Francisco was always fairly low and gradually improved until it approximated the rate for the city as a whole. In 1910, 5.2 percent of blacks were classified as illiterate compared to a city-wide percentage of 2 percent. By 1920, the black illiteracy rate had declined to 3.1 percent, while the city-wide figure stood at 1.9 percent. Within a decade, the black illiteracy rate was cut in half to 1.6 percent, equalling the city-wide percentage (see Table 1.3). Even though illiteracy rates were much lower in far western cities than in the urban South, San Francisco had made exceptional progress in educating virtually its entire school age population within two decades, and the city possessed one of the most literate black communities in the nation. The low black illiteracy rate in San Francisco is also impressive when measured against a northern city like Cleveland, which reported a black illiteracy rate of 15.7 percent as late as 1930.⁵²

The commitment of San Francisco blacks to education was also reflected in the percentage of children who attended high school and college. Almost 16 percent of the city's blacks had completed between one and three years of high school by 1940, compared to 19.2 percent of native whites. Yet 30.2 percent of blacks had completed four years of high school in 1940, compared to 46.5 percent of native whites and 23.5 percent of foreign-born whites. The percentage of blacks who completed between one and three years of college was also higher than that of foreign-born whites, but only half the percentage of native whites. The percentage of blacks who completed four years or more of college lagged behind that of both native whites and foreign-born whites. The median number of school years that blacks completed was higher than the median for either foreign-born whites or members of other nonwhite races, but lower than the median for native whites. San Franciscans could

Table 1.4. Years of School Completed by Ethnic Group, San Francisco, 1940 (in percentage)

	Other races	Negro	Native white	Foreign-born white
No school completed	10.5	2.7	0.4	4.9
1-4 years	19.1	12.0	2.2	12.0
5-6 years	13.6	15.0	4.3	11.1
7-8 years	21.9	31.7	29.0	29.7
High school: 1-3 years	12.4	15.6	19.3	9.1
High school: 4 or more	14.0	14.6	27.2	14.4
College: 1-3 years	2.4	3.9	8.5	3.2
College: 4 or more	3.6	2.1	7.9	3.6
Median school years	7.7	8.2	11.4	8.0

Source: United States Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940: Characteristics of the Population, Reports by states* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 2:621, 660.

boast that their small black community was as literate and educated as most whites and that blacks shared a strong commitment to educate their children⁵³ (see Table 1.4).

Family stability among black households was also reflected in adequate health care, low juvenile delinquency levels, and low crime rates. Public health care for black San Franciscans, though superior to the health care blacks received throughout the South and in some northern cities, still lagged behind white health care in several areas. In some years blacks suffered a significantly higher mortality rate than whites as well as a higher incidence of some diseases. Between 1937 and 1941, according to the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the black mortality rate was 50 percent higher than the white rate. Blacks died from syphilis at a rate seven times higher than whites, from nephritis five times more frequently than whites, and from respiratory diseases, such as pneumonia and influenza, between two and three times more often than whites. Whites died at comparable rates from many diseases, however, and outstripped the black death rate in several others. The death rate from diabetes was almost equal for both races, and white mortality rates from cerebral hemorrhage and heart disease exceeded those of blacks. By and large, blacks benefited from San Francisco's health care facilities and acquired few of the chronic health symptoms that characterized blacks in northern ghettos, such as disproportionately high rates of infant mortality and infectious diseases.⁵⁴ Moreover, black patients, though not black physicians, were permitted to use San Francisco's clinics and hospitals and the full range of the city's health facilities on an integrated basis.

The options for black families in caring for their old, sick, and destitute were limited by their low economic status. Lacking the financial resources to commit their family members to private nursing homes, most blacks simply let their parents live out their remaining years under their own roofs. Since black families were generally small and the number of elderly blacks was never very large, aging blacks often spent their final years in the company of a charitable person, in one of the city's almshouses, or in the public relief home. For instance, the black editor Philip A. Bell was supported by a charitable "society of ladies" during his final years. Similarly, the black boardinghouse keeper Mary Ellen "Mammy" Pleasant spent her final year in the company of friends in San Francisco. Black physician Stuart T. Davison, however, lived his final year in Laguna Honda, the city's public relief home. Oakland's black community, which had almost twice the number of blacks as San Francisco by 1930, attempted to solve this problem, at least in part, by establishing a home for their aged and infirm. Black San Franciscans, however, relied upon the support of family and friends, charity, and public institutions.⁵⁵

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It appears that the crime rate was low in San Francisco's black community. Since annual police reports did not list the race of offenders before 1940, it is difficult to ascertain the crime rate among any race or ethnic group, but neither the white press nor public officials labeled blacks a crime ridden population. The Chinese community, on the other hand, was repeatedly portrayed by the press as a cesspool of vice, prostitution, gambling, and drugs, particularly opium. In only one category, prostitution, were blacks arrested at a higher percentage than whites, which was true throughout the West. The economic pressures on black women, coupled with the meagerness of the incomes they earned from domestic and menial service, made them more likely to resort to prostitution than white women.⁵⁶

Juvenile delinquency was never a serious concern for black leaders or San Francisco's city fathers. The black juvenile case load was small in most years and the offenses were generally minor. In 1928-1929, for example, black teens were only three of 463 juvenile delinquency cases, and four years later, only six of 563. By 1938, blacks made up only 30 cases, although the city-wide case load had grown to 1571.⁵⁷ In San Francisco, unlike many large cities, there was no evidence of black street gangs or of large groups of black children lounging on street corners creating a public nuisance. On the contrary, newspapers, public records, and personal interviews reveal that black children in San Francisco were orderly and well behaved and that the majority of their social and re-

creational activities were structured and organized through schools, churches, and community centers.

It is difficult to explain the low black delinquency rate in San Francisco, given the magnitude of the problem in other urban areas. Mary White Ovington and W. E. B. Du Bois believed that the high incidence of working black mothers in New York and Philadelphia contributed to the high delinquency rate in those cities, for their children were left unsupervised and without structured activities to occupy their time. Black women in San Francisco, however, were employed in equal proportion to black women in most northern cities, so employment alone would not explain this problem. The well-coordinated recreation and social service programs available for black San Franciscans provide a partial answer. The Madame C. J. Walker Home for Motherless Girls and the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center offered diverse programs, including lodging, recreation, and community activities. Du Bois wrote in his classic study, *The Philadelphia Negro*, that these services were absent in Philadelphia's seventh ward, where most blacks resided, and that a community center or YMCA "might meet the wants of the young man."⁵⁸ Additionally, the small number of black children in San Francisco may have curtailed some antisocial behavior, such as the formation of street gangs, which were more common in larger black and Hispanic communities. Several black San Franciscans, including Alfred Butler and F. L. Ritchardson, argued that black children were more respectful of adults when the black community was small, and that children who misbehaved in public would be more likely to encounter reprisals from their parents in a community where everyone knew each other. In San Francisco's tightly knit black community, adults were not only expected to maintain authority over their own children, but also to exert influence over black children in the larger community.⁵⁹

Housing

San Francisco's racial ambivalence was most clearly evident over the issue of housing for blacks. Black families had faced a relatively flexible housing market before 1900, and between 1900 and 1930 they were restricted neither by statute nor by restrictive covenants from residing in almost any residential area. Like Milwaukee, which also had a small black population, San Francisco never created a black ghetto. Blacks were dispersed throughout the city in integrated neighborhoods, intermingled with an array of other ethnic and racial groups. Although small black enclaves did spring up in the Central district, the downtown sector, North Beach, South of Market, and the Western Addition, the incidence

of residential segregation was low—a fairly typical pattern in western communities. (Many western cities did not designate segregated neighborhood boundaries during their formative decades, but would adopt more restrictive housing laws as the black populations increased in the twentieth century.) Although restrictive housing statutes had been directed at San Francisco's large Chinese population during the late nineteenth century, those statutes had no impact on the residential patterns of blacks. In fact, the absence of housing segregation laws directed against blacks would set San Francisco apart from many northern cities, such as Chicago and Cleveland. Because San Francisco's black population remained small between 1900 and 1940, in contrast to its larger Chinese population, most whites never feared an "invasion" of blacks into their neighborhoods that would lower their property values and disrupt their way of life—a fear that Allan H. Spear and Kenneth L. Kusmer documented in Chicago and Cleveland. Nor did white San Franciscans seem to share the fear that polarized Detroit during the 1940s—that if blacks lived in white neighborhoods they would either molest white women or marry them. Consequently, neither the social unrest nor the racial violence that plagued many American cities between 1917 and 1940, when blacks attempted to rent or purchase homes in white communities, occurred in San Francisco.⁶⁰

Between 1920 and 1930, however, as San Francisco's black population began to increase, a greater proportion of blacks began moving into the Western Addition. By 1930 almost half of San Francisco's blacks resided in this area. Assembly district thirty alone contained 38.1 percent of all blacks. Another 14.6 percent resided in assembly district twenty-two, 15.8 percent occupied assembly district thirty-one, and 10 percent lived in Assembly district thirty-three. These four assembly districts contained 78.5 percent of all black residents in 1930, an indication that blacks had become more likely to cluster in the wake of an expanding black population.⁶¹

The Western Addition, an area approximately one square mile in size, became the hub of black life by 1930 and the preferred residential area for black residents. The narrow strip along Fillmore Street from McAllister to Sutter, bordered by Divisadero Street and Webster Street, in particular, became the focal point of black activity. By 1933, the *San Francisco Spokesman*, a black newspaper, labeled the Fillmore district "densely populated with Negroes."⁶² The majority of black businesses and institutions were located in this section, roughly eight blocks by six blocks, and blacks frequently gathered alongside the shops and business establishments to converse and intermingle. Small settlements of blacks

Western Addition

could be found as far north as California Street, but the further north one ventured, the less integrated the neighborhoods became. The thirty-first assembly district, an area running north to south from Pine Street to the Marina district, and bordered by Van Ness Avenue on the east and Parker Street on the west, also contained a large settlement of blacks. Additionally, an enclave of blacks emerged south of the downtown sector, from Market Street to Bryant Street, and continued along the Embarcadero.⁶³

San Franciscans of all races were more inclined to rent than to own property, and blacks were no different. Yet blacks were far less likely to own property than foreign-born or native whites. By 1900, 92 percent of black San Franciscans rented their dwellings, which approximated the percentage of black renters in a northern industrial city like Pittsburgh. By 1930, only 13.6 percent of black families owned their dwellings, compared with 35.1 percent of native white families and 41.6 percent of foreign-born whites. Moreover, blacks paid substantially less for their homes than white property owners. The median value of native whites' homes was 24 percent higher than that of the homes of blacks. Although less striking, the median value of the homes of foreign-born whites was 10 percent higher than that of homes owned by blacks. The higher property values of whites reflected their more secure economic footing, particularly their domination of the professions and the skilled trades, but also their virtual monopoly of white collar jobs.⁶⁴

Blacks also occupied a disproportionate amount of substandard housing. True, San Francisco faced a "housing problem," but blacks were far more likely to occupy inferior housing than whites. The *1939 Real Property Survey*, a comprehensive report of housing conditions in San Francisco, noted that almost all blacks lived in the Central, Western Addition, or South of Market districts, and that black households were "in poor condition and more congested than homes occupied by white families." The principal black district (census tract J, which included the Western Addition), concluded the report, was a "blighted community," for it contained over a third of the city's substandard housing.⁶⁵

The housing conditions of blacks, however, must be viewed in the total context of San Francisco's residential conditions, because a significant percentage of San Francisco's housing was of poor quality. But if housing was bad for most San Franciscans, blacks were several notches down the ladder, and the Chinese occupied the bottom rung.⁶⁶ Although the substandard residential hotels housed almost exclusively white renters, the Chinese perhaps suffered most in their pitifully overcrowded conditions.

The housing situation for the Chinese offers a stark contrast with the

Chinese

opportunities for blacks to secure decent housing. San Francisco's Chinatown was a segregated community, "as thoroughly segregated as black districts of the South during the same time period."⁶⁷ And whereas blacks had gained the right to live in any neighborhood that they could afford, the Chinese, with few exceptions, were trapped in some of the worst housing in San Francisco. A San Francisco Board of Supervisor's report noted that some of Chinatown's places of business and places of amusement were "the filthiest spot[s] inhabited by men, women and children on the American continent." The investigators discovered that overcrowded conditions were the rule: in one instance ninety-four occupants lived in ten rooms designed to accommodate thirty-one people. The fact that the Chinese composed approximately 8 percent of San Francisco's population in 1870 and 4.6 percent in 1900 (in contrast to 0.9 percent and 0.5 percent for blacks during the same years) meant that their housing needs were considerably greater than blacks. This may explain why whites were willing to integrate a small black community into their neighborhoods, but unwilling to integrate the Chinese.⁶⁸

Housing discrimination, although evident and assailed by black leaders in their press and their protest organizations, was not a conspicuous feature of San Francisco's race relations before 1940. This fact set San Francisco apart from many cities that segregated blacks residentially. Black San Franciscans lived in virtually every neighborhood, and members of the black middle class, such as Joseph Foreman, Emma Scott, Mary McCants Stewart, and Irene Bell Ruggles, purchased homes in the predominantly white Richmond and Sunset districts without difficulty. These individuals, all solid members of the black middle class, were widely respected in both the white and black communities. There were no restrictive covenants in these neighborhoods prohibiting the sale of property to blacks and little evidence of community-wide opposition when blacks bought homes in predominantly white neighborhoods. The number of blacks who purchased homes in white communities was never very large and apparently did not pose a threat to middle-class whites. Consequently, most white San Franciscans neither responded with racial violence nor frantically attempted to sell their homes when blacks moved into their neighborhoods. Nor did unscrupulous black businessmen engage in "blockbusting," the practice of deliberately alarming whites and convincing them to sell their homes below market value in anticipation of a black "invasion."⁶⁹

Overt residential segregation did surface sporadically in San Francisco. Shortly after the 1906 earthquake, the Oakland Sunshine wrote that "real estate agents do not care to rent to blacks in San Francisco."

segregation

The San Francisco NAACP defended a black family in court who had been denied the opportunity to rent a house in a predominantly white neighborhood. The exclusive white Nob Hill community also attempted to keep blacks out of their neighborhood when they petitioned the court to "enjoin one of their neighbors from leasing property to other than white persons." Similarly, the *San Francisco Spokesman* opined in an editorial: "Residential segregation is as real in California as in Mississippi. A mob is unnecessary. All that's needed is a neighbor[hood] meeting and agreement in writing not to rent, lease, or sell to blacks and the Courts will do the rest." The *Spokesman's* editorial is instructive, because it illustrates that white fears had increased as the black community expanded between 1920 and 1930. It also reveals that restrictive covenants were present in some areas of San Francisco, although the paper never clarified which neighborhoods barred blacks.⁷⁰

Neighborhood improvement associations were also established to keep blacks out of traditionally white neighborhoods. These organizations began to surface during the 1920s as a reaction to the increasing number of blacks who moved into the Western Addition between 1920 and 1930. The most active organization, the Western Addition Improvement and Protective Association, operated in an area of the Western Addition where many blacks lived during the 1920s. The Improvement Association fought to keep blacks out of certain neighborhoods in the Western Addition. In one case it attempted to prevent a black woman from obtaining a permit to remodel an old building for the purpose of establishing a church. It also opposed the sale of property in the Western Addition to the Booker T. Washington Community Center.⁷¹

Named in honor of the great Tuskegee leader, the Booker T. Washington Community Center originally operated from a Geary Street basement with a low ceiling. The former director of boys programs, F. L. Ritchardson, stated that conditions were so cramped and awkward that tumbling was virtually the only activity that boys could engage in. Through diligent fund raising and careful planning, the Community Center purchased a building on Divisadero Street in the Western Addition.⁷² The Improvement Association contested the purchase and organized strategy meetings in an attempt to nullify the sale, arguing that blacks and Asians depreciated property values. It vowed to halt the growth of both groups in the Western Addition. "It is now high time for the white residents and property owners to get together and protect themselves from this rapid invasion," said one official. An Improvement Association spokesman cautioned that if white residents ignored his warning "you may wake up any morning to find that you have some new

colored neighbors who have moved into the house next door to you."⁷³ These charges united the Improvement Association's white supporters. They hired an attorney, who pledged to inform residents how they could "protect property by law upheld in [the] Supreme Court." In the end, the association was not successful in preventing the sale of the property to the Community Center, but it kept abreast of the financial status of the new center. When it learned that the Community Center had missed a single payment, it bought the mortgage and demanded the entire payment at once. "We have been having quite a fight here in San Francisco for the past month," wrote local black attorney Edward Mabson to Robert Bagnall, director of branches of the NAACP's national office.⁷⁴

Although shaken, the small black community regrouped and attempted to raise the necessary funds. Black ministers held special services and collections and emphasized the necessity of community-wide unity. Black women's clubs organized fund raising activities—dances, bazaars, and teas. Black and white volunteers went door-to-door soliciting small contributions. Alice Butler, the wife of San Francisco's only black funeral director, organized a committee that raised several thousand dollars. In a matter of weeks, the necessary funds were raised and the potential crisis averted. "In spite of their determination, we have been successful in stamping out the movement," noted Edward Mabson.⁷⁵

The episode unified the black community. The Improvement Association's opposition also illustrated that black institutions like the Booker T. Washington Community Center could exist in proximity to white residential areas during the 1920s, provided they were willing to fight. The Improvement Association's opposition to the Community Center revealed that some white organizations feared a potential black influx into their communities and were willing to organize to maintain the status quo.

The extent of San Francisco's residential segregation between 1900 and 1940 is difficult to measure for several reasons. Realtors and property owners were reluctant to admit their bias in renting or selling property to blacks, blacks did not always report housing discrimination, and improvement associations left few records of their activities. No single agency served as a watchdog to report housing discrimination, although the NAACP did report and investigate cases that were brought to their attention. Nor did local or state laws prohibit housing discrimination in San Francisco. Most of the evidence regarding housing discrimination is drawn from the black press or the files of the San Francisco NAACP. On the face of it, these sources indicate that housing discrimination against blacks was infrequent between 1900 and 1930, and that it was practiced primarily by individual property owners, rather than orchestrated by

powerful interest groups. When whites did organize to ban blacks from their neighborhoods, as the Western Addition Improvement and Protective Association had attempted to do, they did not always succeed.

Between 1930 and 1940, as some whites had feared, more and more blacks moved into census tract J in the Western Addition. It is difficult to explain why. Perhaps the onset of the Great Depression forced some black families to move into this area, but the rents there were not cheaper. The 1939 Real Property Survey reported that black tenant families had the highest median gross monthly rental at \$25.89 of all groups in San Francisco. The Chinese reported the lowest rate at \$18.97, followed by whites at \$23.89. Black tenant families also paid a higher percentage of their income than either the Chinese or white San Franciscans for shelter. Black families with an annual income of \$400 to \$599, for example, paid 55.5 percent of their income for housing, compared to 39.6 percent for Chinese families and 49.1 percent for white families with comparable incomes. Similarly, black families that earned between \$1200 and \$1399 annually, the highest category reported, paid 26.8 percent of their income for housing, compared to 20.3 percent for Chinese families and 23.0 percent for white families. These figures are striking for several reasons. First, they reveal that despite living in substandard housing, blacks still paid higher rents than whites, while the Chinese paid the lowest rents of any race for substandard housing. Neither the income level nor the social class of blacks made any difference in the percentage of their annual income that was paid for rental housing. Black renters paid a higher percentage of their incomes than either the Chinese or whites at every level for which annual incomes were reported.⁷⁶

Although higher rents for blacks in substandard housing indicate that blacks were treated differently than whites in the rental market, it is a poor barometer of the extent of housing discrimination. Alma and Karl Taeuber concluded, however, in their broad study of residential segregation, *Negroes in Cities*, that San Francisco's residential segregation index in 1940 was higher than the index in any major city in northern California. Moreover, the average residential segregation index for ten cities in the West was 82.7 compared to an average index of 85.2 for all regions of the country. Hence, the small black populations in western cities like San Francisco, Oakland, Portland, Seattle, and Denver, did not necessarily facilitate integrated housing patterns. Rather, by 1940, black San Franciscans were concentrated in a handful of well-defined neighborhoods, much like their counterparts in medium-sized cities like Evansville and Milwaukee as well as larger urban communities throughout the nation.⁷⁷

Table 1.5. Indexes of Residential Segregation for Selected Western and Northern Cities, 1940

Berkeley, Calif.	81.2	Philadelphia, Pa.	88.0
Boston, Mass.	86.3	Pittsburgh, Pa.	82.0
Chicago, Ill.	95.0	Pasadena, Calif.	84.2
Cleveland, Ohio	92.0	Portland, Oreg.	83.8
Denver, Colo.	87.9	Sacramento, Calif.	77.8
Detroit, Mich.	89.9	San Diego, Calif.	84.4
Los Angeles, Calif.	84.2	San Francisco, Calif.	82.9
Milwaukee, Wis.	92.9	Seattle, Wash.	82.2
New York, N.Y.	86.8	Topeka, Kans.	80.8
Oakland, Calif.	78.4	Mean	82.7
Omaha, Neb.	89.5		

Source: Karl E. Taeuber and Alma F. Taeuber, *Negroes in Cities: Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Change* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1965), pp. 39-41.

San Francisco's residential segregation index in 1940 illustrated that housing discrimination had intensified in the space of a decade, although no ghetto had developed by 1940. The large concentration of black San Franciscans in fewer assembly districts in 1940 reveals that the majority of blacks had moved into a narrow belt of the Western Addition by this time. Although blacks were not forced by statute to reside in a well-defined neighborhood, the Western Addition had become the black section of San Francisco, the geographical area that most whites associated with black settlement. The Western Addition contained most of the substandard housing in San Francisco, and more than half of all black families were housed in these dwellings. The firm belief that future black migrants should continue to settle primarily in the Western Addition, rather than disperse throughout the city, was also established by 1940. This idea shaped San Francisco's housing policy during the Second World War and became a critical factor in the creation of a black ghetto during the postwar period.⁷⁸

In spite of its relatively small numbers, between 1900 and 1940, San Francisco's black community was not static in any sense of the word. Quite the contrary, it possessed the same energy and dynamic qualities of more sizable black communities. The expanding black population between 1910 and 1940 would affect the pace of black protest, encourage the growth of black institutions, and influence the quest for better housing and greater employment opportunities. Many black migrants who came to San Francisco between 1910 and 1940 also pressured white employers to hire them in business, industry, the professions, and the service sector, and accordingly, the black industrial class grew rapidly during these years. Similarly, the demographic growth of the black com-

munity between 1910 and 1940 placed increasing pressure on San Francisco's housing market and would result in an increase in housing segregation by 1940. Thus the growth of San Francisco's black community was intimately related to a host of larger issues, including black protest, the growth of the black industrial working class, and increasing ghettoization. Each of these issues had important roots in the demographic changes that the black population underwent before 1940. On the eve of World War II, San Francisco blacks had made considerably more progress in education, health care, and housing than their black counterparts in many other cities. They had also succeeded in breaking down almost every caste barrier that had been erected during the nineteenth century. So, although black San Franciscans were almost equal by 1940, they still lagged behind whites, both natives and foreign-born, in employment opportunities. Politically they exerted no power whatsoever. The degree to which blacks would be permitted to improve their status in these areas would serve as a crucial test for San Francisco's liberalism and challenge the city's image as a racially progressive city. It would also reveal much about San Francisco's civility, its commitment to an egalitarian community, and the strength and vitality of its black leadership and their community institutions.

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51. *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, vol. 2, *Population*, pp. 116-17; *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910*, p. 593; *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, vol. 3, *Reports by States*, p. 61; *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 115-16; *Special Census of San Francisco, California*, August 1, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945); *1950 Census of Population*, vol. 2, *Characteristics of the Population*, pt. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), pp. 5-207; Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial*, p. 24.
52. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, vol. 3, pt. 1, *Reports by States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 69; Mabee's *Black Education in New York State* also examines a black population with a high rate of literacy. On literacy in Cleveland's black community, see Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, p. 211.
53. *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, vol. 2, *Characteristics of the Population*, p. 660. For the shortcomings of black education in the South, see Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South, from 1619 to the Present* (New York: Praeger, 1970); Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915* (New York: Atheneum, 1969); James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
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55. Delilah L. Beasley, *The Negro Trail Blazers of California* (Los Angeles: Times Mirror Printing, 1919), pp. 105-6; *San Francisco Call*, April 27, 1889, p. 5; interview with Josephine Cole, December 9, 1976, San Francisco.
56. *San Francisco Police Department Annual Reports, 1940-1945*; Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, pp. 235-68; Herbert Asbury, *The Barbary Coast: An Informal History of the San Francisco Underworld* (New York: Capricorn, 1968); Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); de Graaf, "Race, Sex, and Region," pp. 285-313. For a broader survey of western black women and crime, consult Anne M. Butler, "Still in Chains: Black Women in Western Prisons, 1865-1910," *Western Historical Quarterly* 20 (February 1989): 18-35; Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco*, p. 71; Barth, *Bitter Strength*, p. 85.

57. *Statistical Report of the San Francisco Juvenile Court, 1927, 1929, 1932, 1938* (San Francisco: City and County of San Francisco); *Youth in a Changing World: San Francisco Juvenile Court Annual Report, 1944* (San Francisco: City and County of San Francisco), p. 37.
58. Ovington, *Half a Man*; Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, p. 195; Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles, History of a Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), pp. 66-67.
59. Interview with Alfred Butler, November 5, 1976, San Francisco; interview with F. L. Ritchardson, September 13, 1976, San Francisco.
60. Loren Miller, *The Petitioners: The Story of the Supreme Court of the United States and the Negro* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966), p. 246; Roger L. Rice, "Residential Segregation by Law, 1910-1917," *Journal of Southern History* 31 (May 1968): 179-99; Lawrence B. de Graaf, "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890-1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 39 (August 1970): 352; Spear, *Black Chicago*, pp. 147-66; Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, pp. 167-71; Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit: The Sojourner Truth Housing Controversy of 1942* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).
61. All information concerning residential characteristics was taken from the United States printed censuses, "Population by Assembly Districts," and checked to ascertain street boundaries by using the assembly district maps in the San Francisco Archives, City Hall, San Francisco. I consulted San Francisco assembly district maps for 1902, 1904, 1907, 1912, 1916, 1926, 1929, 1932, and 1938.
62. *San Francisco Spokesman*, November 22, 1933, p. 6; interviews with Alfred Butler, November 5, 1976, and F. L. Ritchardson, September 13, 1976. Both lived in the Fillmore district before the Second World War. Consult the *Spokesman* between 1932 and 1935 for a representative list of black business establishments during the 1930s. City directories were of little value in locating black businesses.
63. Compiled from printed United States censuses, 1910-1940; San Francisco assembly district maps, 1902, 1916, 1929, 1938, San Francisco City Archives. An Oakland printer, Charles Tilghman, undertook a personal census of black San Franciscans between 1916 and 1917. His results, though not comprehensive, were representative of black residential patterns for the entire city. See *Tilghman's Directory of the Leading Cities of Northern California 1916-1917* (Oakland, Calif.: Tilghman Printing, 1917).
64. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, vol. 6, *Families*, p. 161; Montesano, "The 1900 Census," pp. 57-77; John Bodnar, Roger Simon, and Michael Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982) pp. 255-57.
65. *1939 Real Property Survey, San Francisco, California* (San Francisco: City and County of San Francisco, 1941), pp. 6, 7-9, 24-30; *Housing Authority of the City and County of San Francisco, California, Annual Report for the Year Ending April 18, 1939*, pp. 3-4. To compare the substandard housing of black San Franciscans with housing in another city during the 1930s, see Raymond A. Mohl, "Trouble in Paradise: Race and Housing in Miami during the New Deal Era," *Prologue* 19 (Spring 1987): 7-21.
66. *1939 Real Property Survey*, pp. 4-10, 26-27; *San Francisco Housing Authority, First Annual Report*, pp. 1-5.

67. Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932*.

68. Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932*, pp. 56, 70-71; Willard B. Farwell, *The Chinese at Home and Abroad* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1885), pp. 5-8.

69. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, vol. 1, pt. 1, *Population*, pp. 531, 610; Ophelia Davison to Stuart Davison, November 21, 1918, Stuart T. Davison Papers, African American Historical and Cultural Society, San Francisco; *San Francisco Housing Authority, Second Annual Report, April 18, 1940*, p. 15; *San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Journal of Proceedings, 1938-1940*; *Langley's San Francisco City Directory 1935*, pp. 406, 602; interviews with Josephine Cole, daughter of Joseph Foreman, December 9, 1976, San Francisco; and Mrs. Emma Scott Jones, daughter of Mrs. Emma Scott, June 15, 1976, San Francisco; "Financial Record and Membership Record of San Francisco Branch, NAACP," January 1, 1926, Stewart-Flippin Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University (hereafter cited as Stewart-Flippin Papers); *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910*, p. 186.

70. *Oakland Sunshine*, December 21, 1907; California Assembly Bill 1057, January 21, 1927, introduced by Fred Roberts (original copy in San Francisco Branch files, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., hereafter cited as SFBF, NAACP Papers); director of NAACP Branches to secretary [Lena] Parker, June 17, 1927, SFBF, NAACP Papers; *Western American*, March 18, 1927.

71. *Divisadero District Advocate*, October 10, 1924; *Spokesman*, May 17, 1934, p. 6; "Financial and Membership Records of the San Francisco Branch, NAACP," May 12, 1924 and October 13, 1924, Stewart-Flippin Papers.

72. Interviews with F. L. Ritchardson, September 13, 1976, and February 15, 1977, San Francisco.

73. *Divisadero District Advocate*, October 10, 1924. Blacks in Los Angeles experienced similar problems. See de Graaf, "The City of Black Angels," 348-49.

74. Interview with F. L. Ritchardson, September 13, 1976, San Francisco. This story was confirmed by Katherine Stewart Flippin in an interview on February 17, 1976, in San Francisco. Mrs. Flippin's mother, Mary McCants Stewart, was a cofounder of the Booker T. Washington Community Center. Edward Mabson to Robert Bagnall, October 7, 1924, SFBF, box 23, NAACP Papers; *Divisadero District Advocate*, October 10, 1924.

75. *History of Booker T. Washington Community Center, 1921-1971*; Mabson to Bagnall, October 7, 1924, SFBF, box 23, NAACP Papers; interview with F. L. Ritchardson, September 13, 1976, San Francisco; "Annual Report of the Booker T. Washington Community Center, 1929," Stewart-Flippin Papers; "Preliminary Report on the Booker T. Washington Community Center" [1938-1939], 25 p., Stewart-Flippin Papers.

76. *1939 Real Property Survey*, p. 32.

77. Alma Taeuber and Karl Taeuber, *Negroes in Cities: Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Change* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1965), pp. 40-44; See Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America*, pp. 54-56, regarding the difficulty of measuring residential segregation. See also Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, p. 52, concerning the residential segregation index of San Francisco before 1930. Kusmer states, but offers no evidence, that the residential segregation index was relatively low in San Francisco before 1930 compared to most northern cities. In their study the Taeubers computed the residential segregation index for San Francisco and numerous northern cities between 1940 and 1960, sug-

gesting increasing ghettoization of black San Franciscans and a change in the residential segregation index between 1930 and 1940. Darrel E. Bigham's study of Evansville, Indiana, offers a useful comparison with San Francisco. See Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial*, pp. 21-34, 114-16; Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, pp. 21-25, 180-82.

78. de Graaf, "The City of Black Angels," pp. 323-352; *1939 Real Property Survey*, p. 35; Charles S. Johnson, *The Negro War Worker in San Francisco* (San Francisco: n.p., 1944), p. 3; E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), pp. 270-71.

CHAPTER 2. EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE, 1900-1930

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5. "C. L. Dellums Interview," p. 6; interview with F. L. Ritchardson, February 15, 1976, San Francisco; interview with Revels Cayton, October 21, 1976, San Francisco; *San Francisco Examiner*, November 15, 1978.

6. Information concerning occupations was taken from published censuses of occupations, 1900-1930. See *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Occupations*, pp. 720-24.

7. *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Occupations*, pp. 720-24; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, vol. 4, *Occupations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), pp. 600-601; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Women in Gainful Occupations, 1870 to 1920*, Census Monograph 9 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1929), pp. 8-13; David Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industri-*