

RACE AND RESIDENCE IN DETROIT

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RACE AND
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IN DETROIT

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RACE AND RESIDENCE IN DETROIT

Negro Detroiters are more segregated in their housing today than they were three decades ago.

Available data prove this point beyond question, although the statement itself may seem surprising to those who have witnessed the "invasion" of one "white" neighborhood after another. The statement is also at variance with our democratic pretensions. "Fair housing for all" we proclaim. But the housing used by Negro citizens is almost entirely what is best described as *Ghettoized*.

If this is true, some will ask, how can we explain the existence of so many neighborhoods which were once occupied solely by Caucasians but which now have one or more Negro families? What about the whispering campaigns—"Mr. X is showing his house to 'anyone'?" What about those calls from real estate agents—"Your neighborhood is next. Better sell before the panic." And what about the "Improvement Associations?" Such phenomena suggest a widespread move toward (as well as resistance to) housing integration.

But, to date, *there is no such move*. The apparent discrepancy is explained by this simple fact: As Detroit's Negro population has increased it has spilled out to occupy housing available in adjacent areas. And, since the increase has been constant (due to an excess of births over deaths and to a high in-migration rate), the "spilling" process has been constant. Thus, many Caucasian neighborhoods have been "invaded," giving rise to the idea that those who believe in integrated housing were being fulfilled at last.

But what has actually occurred is that the specific position only, not the existence or the relative location of what may be termed the "Black

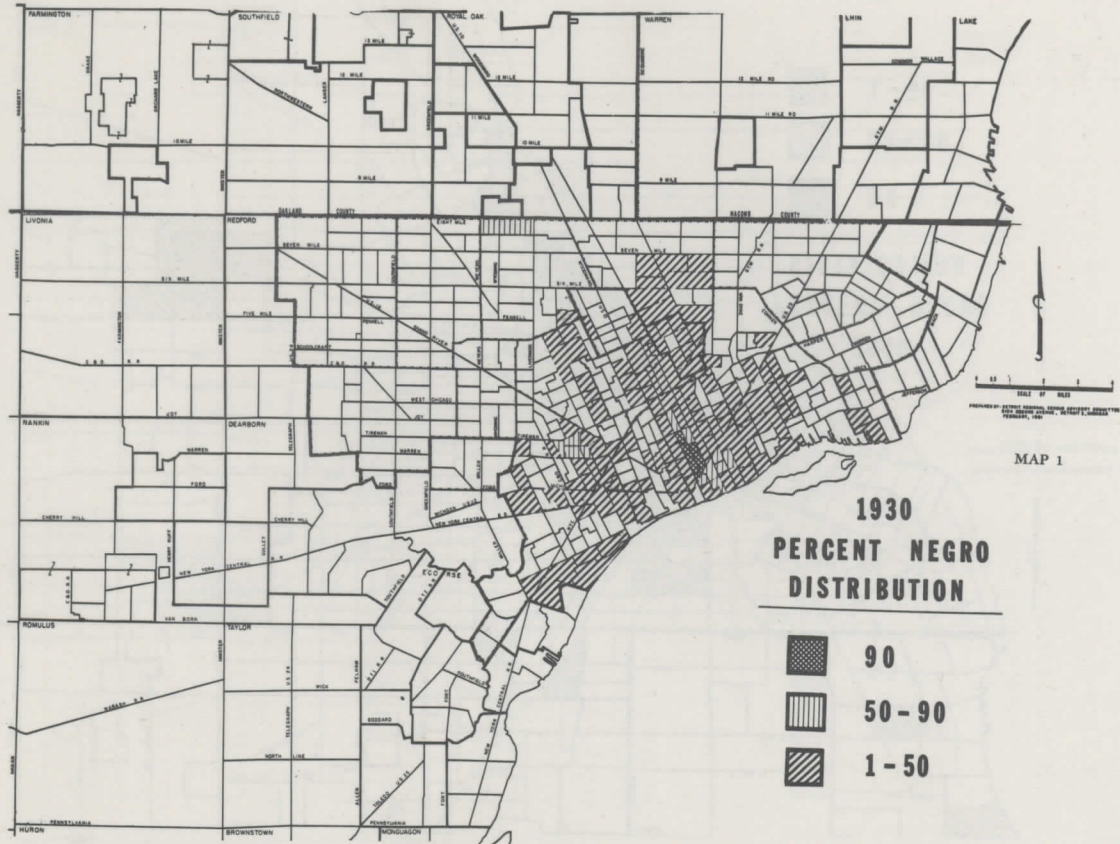
Ghetto" walls has been altered by internal pressure. In addition, the wall has become increasingly impenetrable. These central facts are dramatically demonstrated by the accompanying tables and maps which show that —

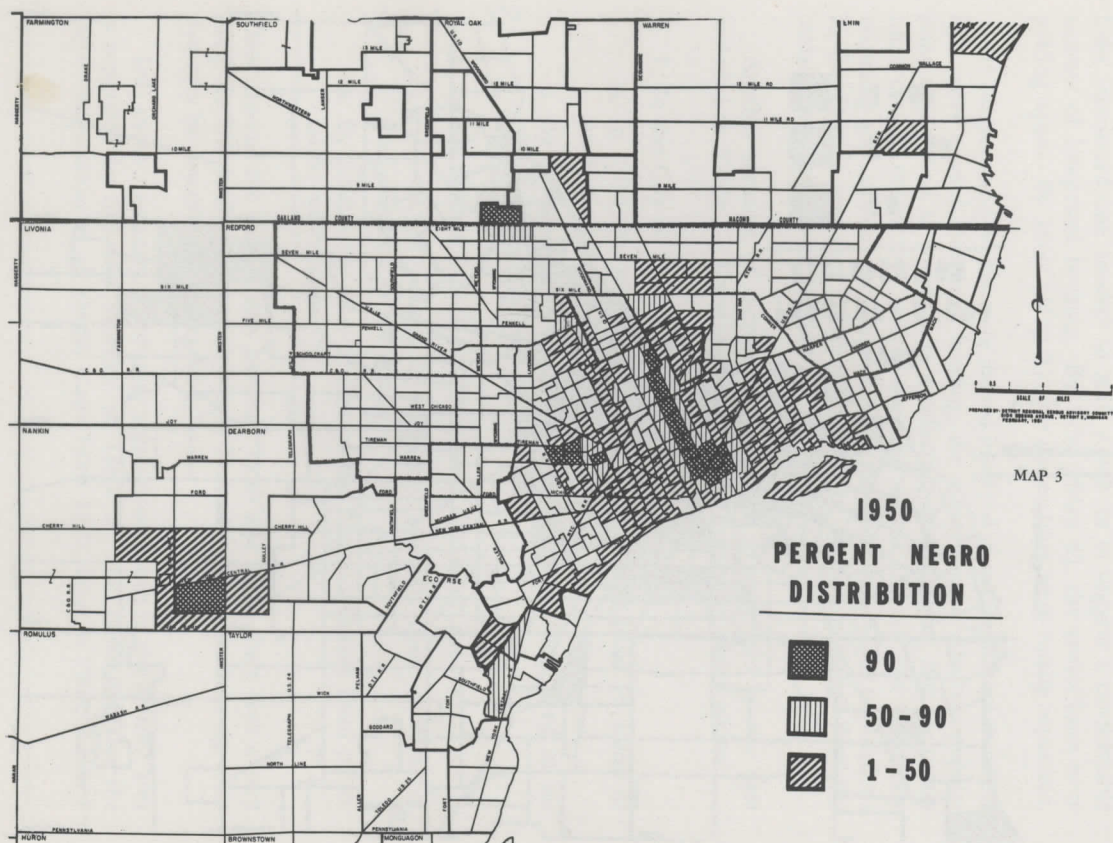
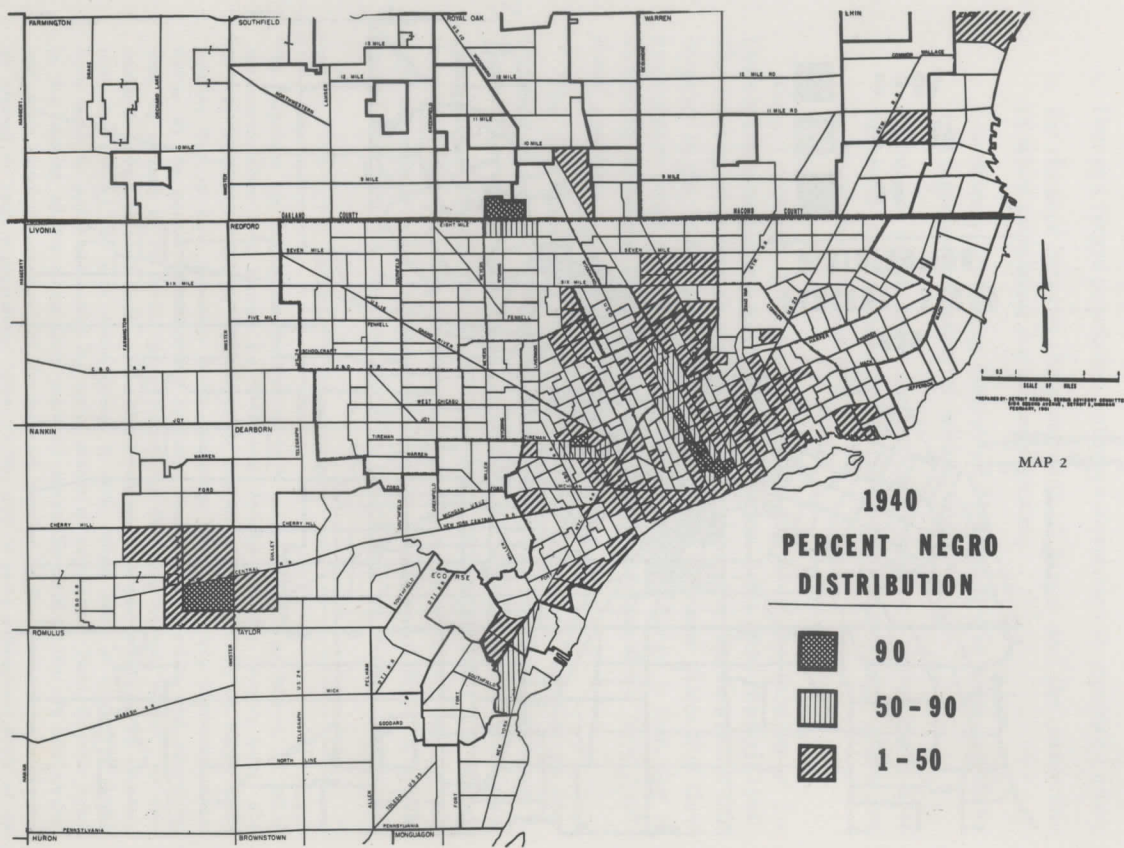
- a. Detroit's Negro population remains concentrated in segregated areas;
- b. the distance between the center line of Negro and the center line of white population is constantly greater;
- c. a constantly decreasing number of Negroes live in areas populated by a significant number of whites; and,
- d. all but an insignificant number of Detroit area census tracts have remained racially unchanged *or* have become increasingly ghettoized as Negro housing districts.

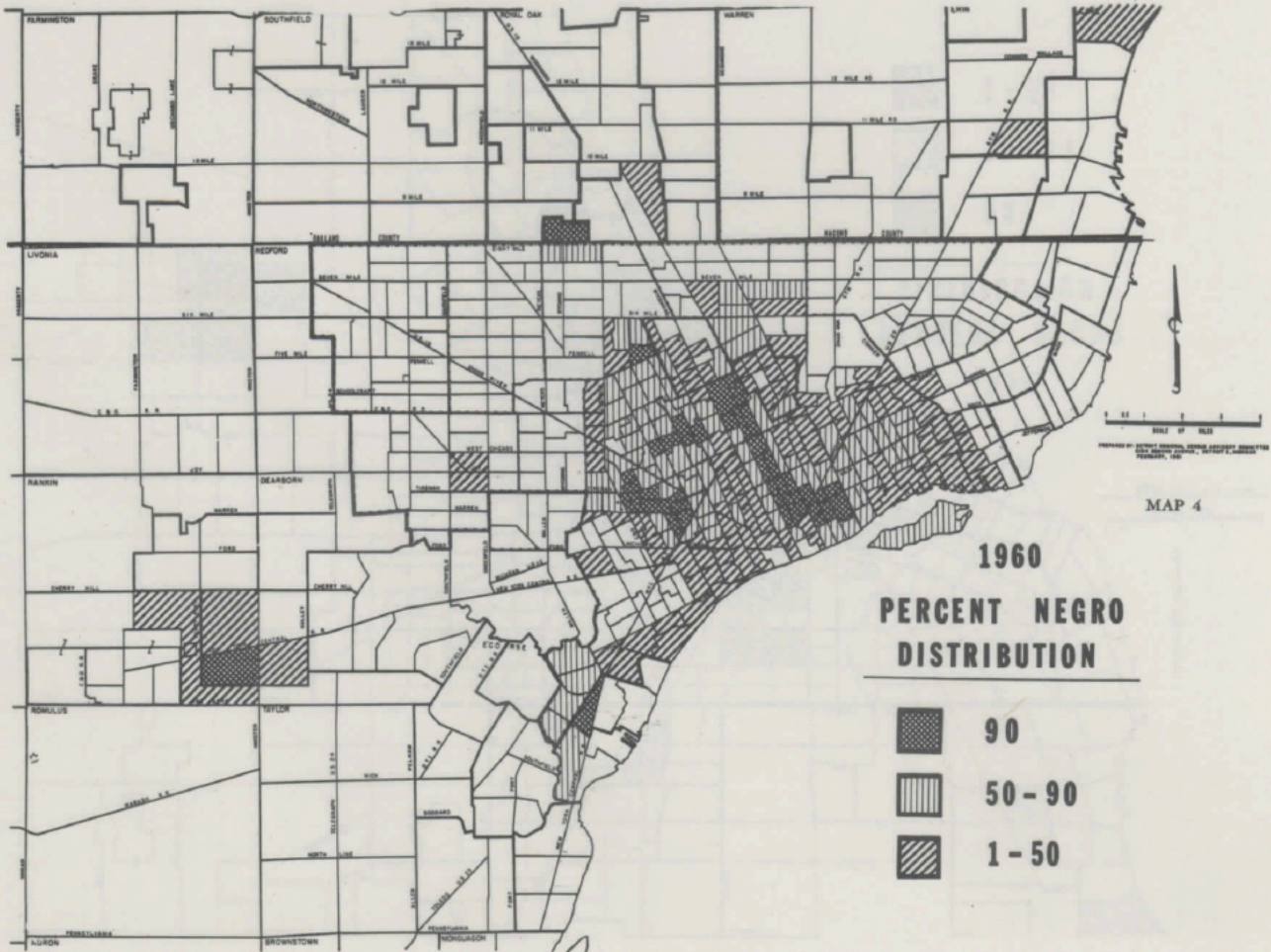
Maps 1 through 4, based on census data, depict the location of the Detroit area's major and minor Negro "ghettos" from 1930 through 1960. The most notable feature of these maps is their clear demonstration that Negroes in the 1960 decade live in essentially the same places that their predecessors lived during the 1930's—the only difference is that, due to increasing numbers, they occupy more space *centered about their traditional quarters*.

The fact that the Detroit area Negro population remains as concentrated as ever is depicted in still another way by Maps 5 through 9. These maps show what may be termed the center line of population concentration for each racial group in 1940, 1950 and 1960.¹ On Map 5, the center line of white population is shown to have moved steadily outward on almost all sides, thus reflecting the well-known flight of whites toward the suburbs. In contrast, the center line of Negro population,

¹The technique for finding the location of each center line was as follows: a) all of the metropolitan area tracted by 1940 was divided into five roughly equal pie-shaped sectors, the specific boundaries of which were determined by major traffic arteries that, in turn, generally divide groupings of consecutively numbered census tracts; b) the center of population for each racial group (white and non-white, with 98 percent of the latter being Negro and therefore termed "Negro" for convenience' sake) in each sector in the three census years was calculated by standard methods; and c) for each racial group in each census year, a curve was drawn from sector to sector connecting the sector centers of population. Note: Greater detail in the location of the center lines could be shown by dividing the city into smaller and more numerous sectors, but the general location of the center lines would not be altered by such a procedure. Note: In this and in some subsequent parts of the analysis, 1930 is not considered because the suburban areas were not tracted until the 1940 census.







shown on Map 6, has actually moved inward, a movement which reflects the relatively great increase in the number of Negroes concentrated in the older areas of Detroit. Maps 7, 8 and 9 compare the center lines of the two racial groups in the three census years. In 1940 (Map 7), the center lines intersected one another in such a way as to suggest a considerable amount of integrated housing. By 1950 (Map 8), the center lines were pulling apart. By 1960 (Map 9), the center lines were totally separated.

If Negroes and whites were indeed involved in any significant numbers in a move toward integrated housing, the center lines of the two populations would tend to converge as a reflection of the move. But the center lines cannot reflect that which does not exist. Indeed, the constantly widening gap between the center lines of the white and Negro populations in the Detroit area is a dynamic measure of *increasing* rather than decreasing segregation in housing.

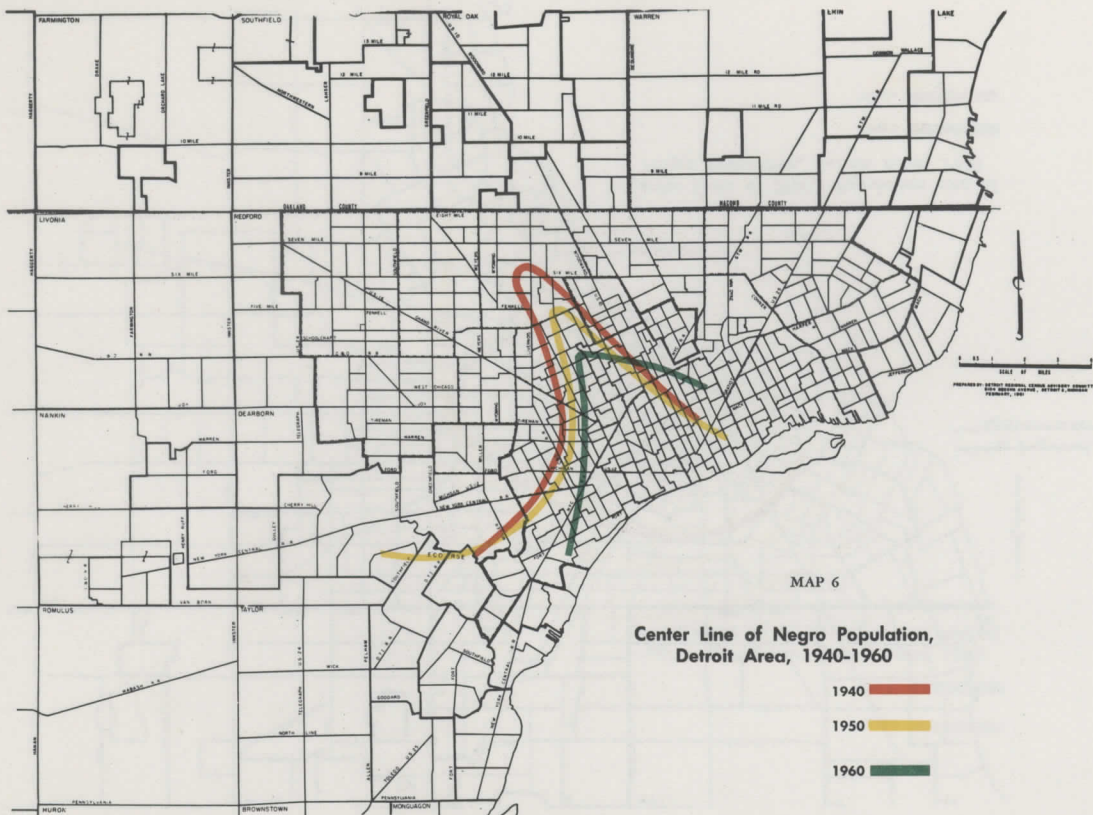
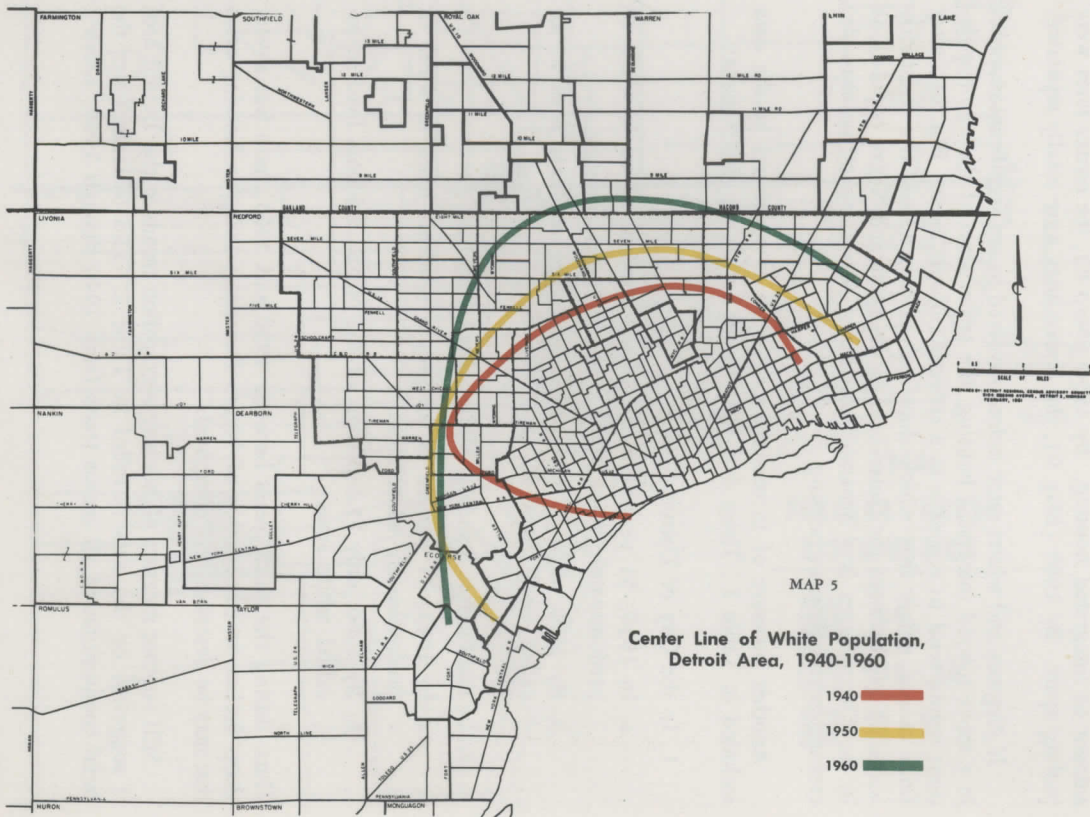
Another measure of increasing segregation is suggested by the data included in Table 1. These data support the following observations:

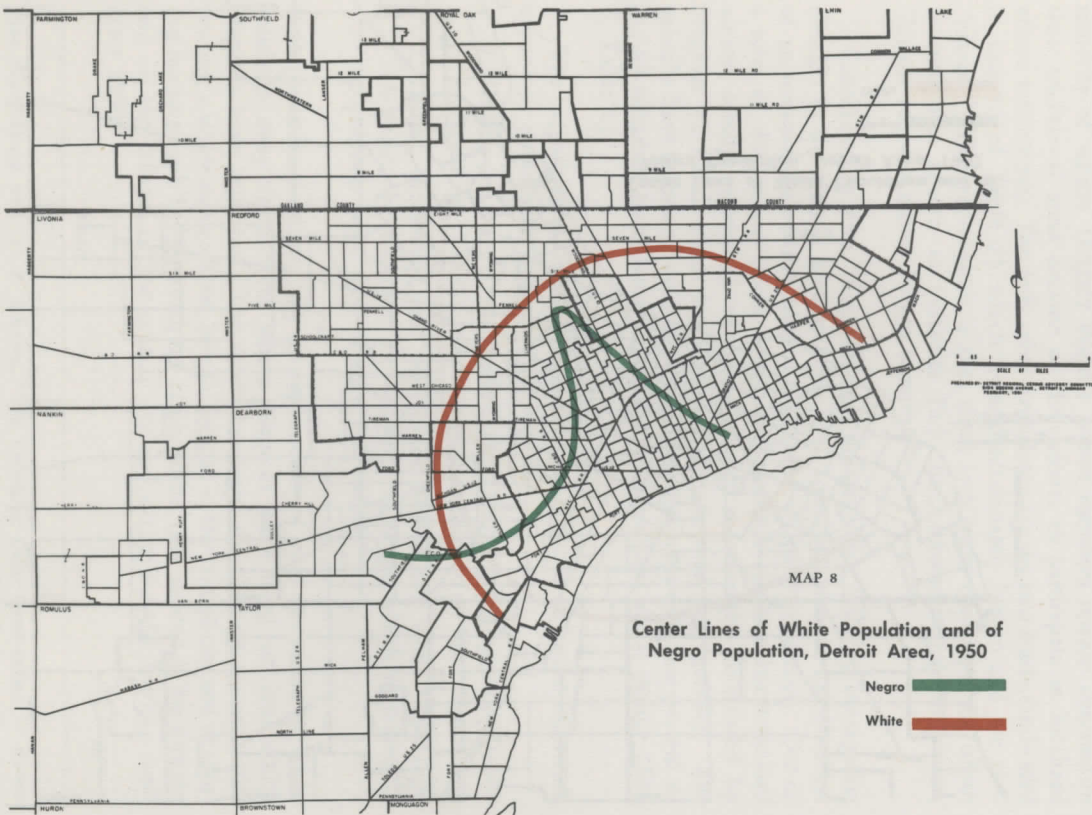
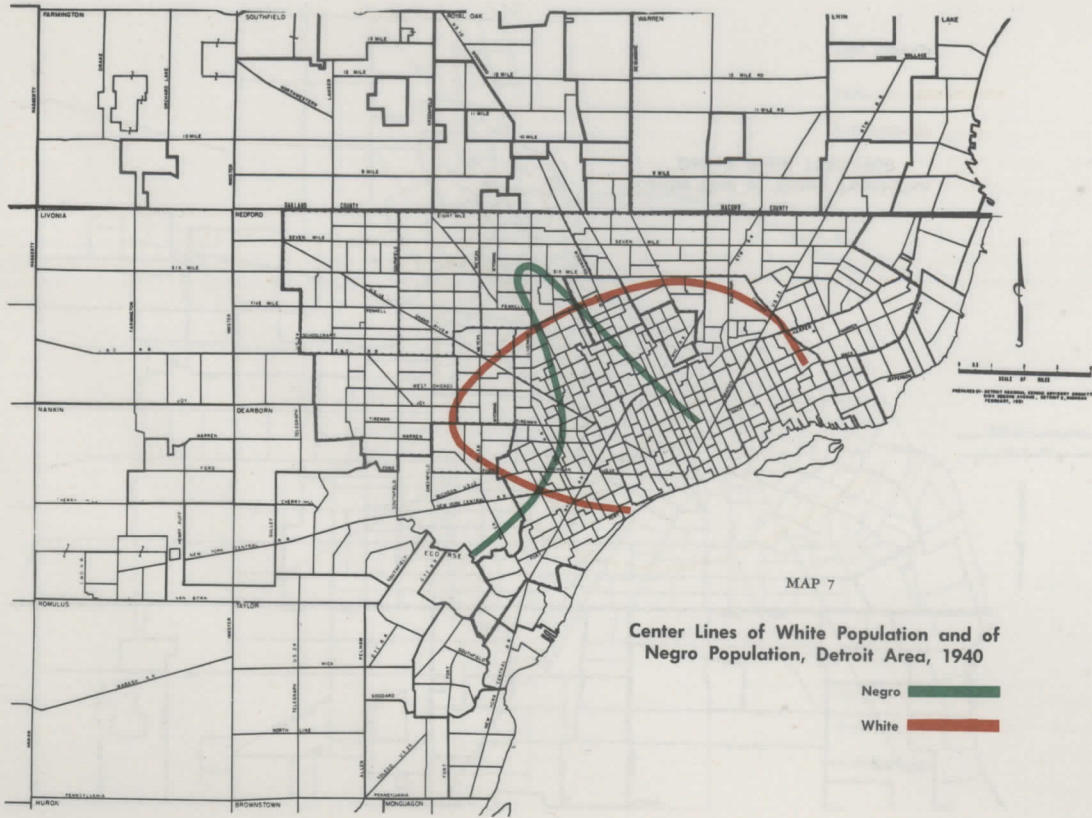
1. In the City of Detroit—
 - a. In 1930, 51 percent of all Negro residents lived in white or predominately white areas.
 - b. By 1960, only 15 percent of the Negro residents lived in so-called white areas.
2. In the Detroit Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area—²
 - a. In 1940, 31 percent of all Negro residents lived in white or predominately white areas.
 - b. By 1960, only 15.6 percent of the Negro residents lived in so-called white areas.

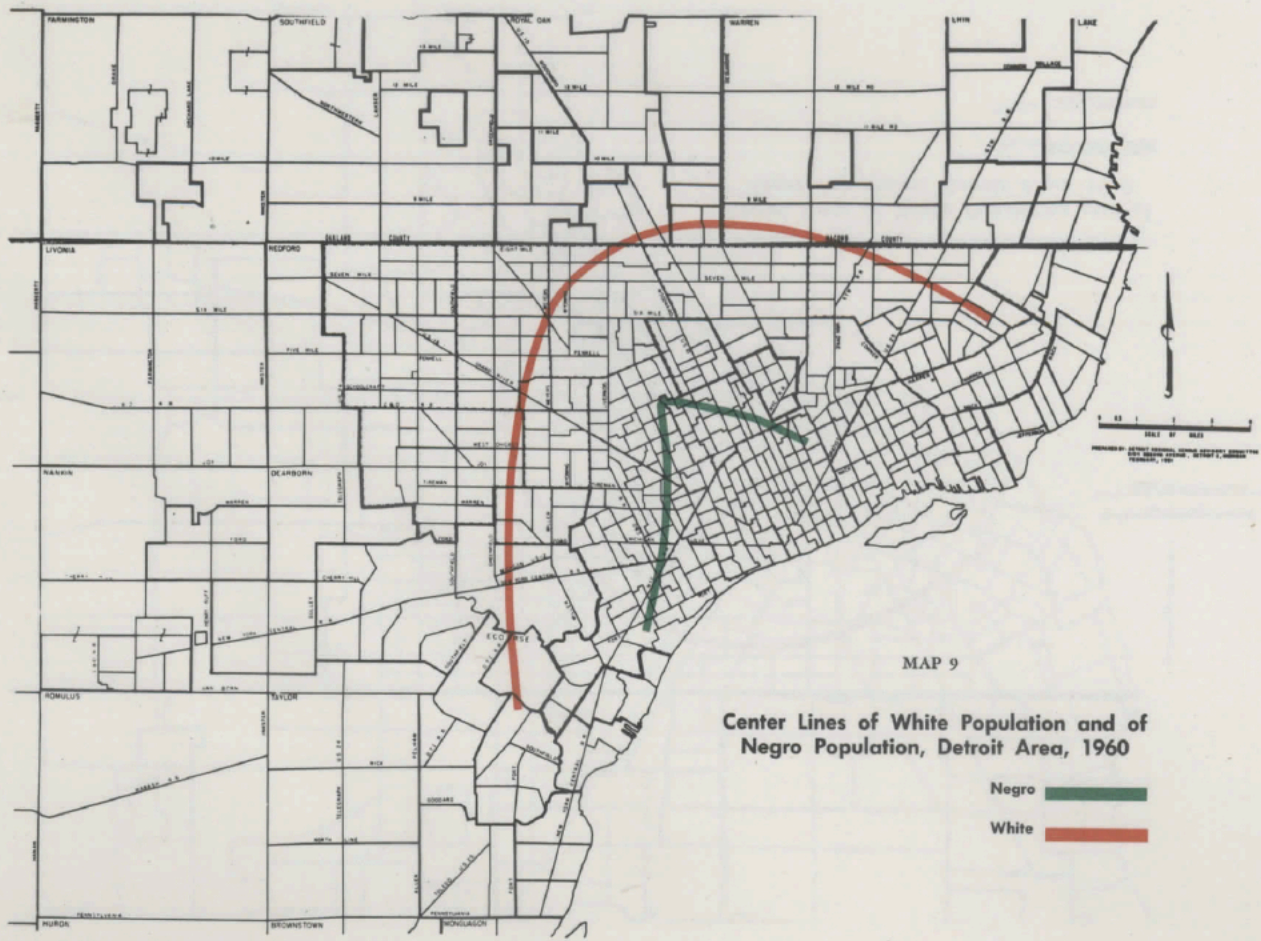
Thus, during the thirty years between 1930 and 1960 there was a very sharp decline in the number of Negro Detroiters living in housing areas that may be described as "integrated."

Still another measure of housing segregation trends in the Detroit area is suggested by the data included in Table 2. This table indicates the racial composition of all census tracts from 1940 through 1960. Lines 1

²1930 is not considered in this and in some subsequent parts of the analysis because the suburban areas were not tracted until the 1940 census.







through 8 on the table demonstrate that the mode for Detroit tracts from 1940 through 1960 has been to *remain* predominately Negro (line 1) or predominately white (line 2), or to *become* increasingly, and usually predominately, Negro (lines 3 through 8). The only major exceptions to the rule are those tracts (indicated in line 9) which have a substantial ethnic minority of whites (largely Polish) whose members remain attached to their traditional areas because of their desire to participate in localized ethnic institutions. The only other exceptions are the two tracts (indicated in line 10 of Table 2) which were predominately Negro and are now "Mixed." The explanation is that these two tracts constitute the urban renewal area known as Lafayette Park, thus substantiating the phrase, "Urban renewal means Negro removal."

Considered in toto, then, Table 2 indicates that housing segregation changes in the Detroit area between 1940 and 1960 were in the direction of an *increase*, rather than toward a decrease, of the phenomenon. Out of a total of 484 census tracts, 438—or 91 percent—have either remained almost totally segregated or have become increasingly dominated by Negroes (a trend which has always ended in total segregation). The suburbs have remained even more rigidly segregated; only one percent of the 88 suburban tracts have undergone any significant racial change (line 6, Table 2).

The magnitude of the entire phenomenon is conveyed by the following apparently paradoxical generalizations:

1. During the twenty year period, the Detroit city Negro population *increased* by 333,000, yet every Negro area *lost* in total population.
2. During the twenty year period, the Detroit city white population *decreased* by 290,000, yet the only sub-areas which increased in population were those termed "all white."

Both generalizations can only be explained by a mass movement of white residents away from areas where Negroes have lived or into which Negroes have migrated. The result has been the creation of two cities bearing a single name: One, Negro, located in the central city and occupying housing built before 1930; the other, white, now located in the suburbs and on the fringes of the central city and occupying the housing built after 1930.³

³See Harry Sharp and Leo F. Schnore, "The Changing Color Composition of Metropolitan Areas," *Land Economics*, 38 (May, 1962), pp. 169-185, for evidence that housing segregation in the Detroit area is representative rather than unique.

Table 1.—NUMBER AND PERCENT OF NEGROES AND WHITES LIVING IN NEGRO AND WHITE AREAS, DETROIT STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA, 1930 - 1960

Part A

	NUMBER							
	1930		1940		1950		1960	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
DETROIT AND ENCLAVES								
Negro Ghetto*	1,330	19,908	1,843	37,476	4,157	106,013	4,245	113,786
Predominately Negro	17,267	41,473	33,703	66,429	45,017	117,420	113,255	305,494
Predominately White	602,059	62,497	419,499	47,857	456,703	79,479	346,322	75,376
White Ghetto	923,301	1,787	1,113,537	2,011	1,120,084	1,765	778,244	428
Total	1,543,957	125,665	1,568,582	153,773	1,626,861	304,677	1,242,066	495,084
DETROIT AND SUBURBS								
Negro Ghetto	**	**	1,935	41,879	4,621	131,793	4,588	136,426
Predominately Negro	**	**	38,470	70,799	49,570	123,310	118,359	311,214
Predominately White	**	**	431,209	48,563	489,979	80,781	402,456	82,930
White Ghetto	**	**	1,426,321	2,861	1,778,982	3,619	2,032,064	2,057
Total			1,897,935	164,082	2,323,152	339,503	2,557,467	532,627

Part B

	PERCENT							
	1930		1940		1950		1960	
		Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
DETROIT AND ENCLAVES								
Negro Ghetto*	—	15.8	—	24.4	—	34.8	—	23.0
Predominately Negro	1.1	33.0	2.1	43.2	2.8	38.5	9.1	61.8
Predominately White	39.0	49.8	26.7	31.1	28.1	26.1	28.0	15.2
White Ghetto	59.9	1.4	71.2	1.3	69.1	.6	62.9	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
DETROIT AND SUBURBS								
Negro Ghetto	**	**	.1	25.5	.2	38.8	.2	25.6
Predominately Negro	**	**	2.0	43.2	2.1	36.3	4.6	58.4
Predominately White	**	**	22.7	29.6	21.1	23.8	15.7	15.6
White Ghetto	**	**	75.2	1.7	76.6	1.1	79.5	.4
Total			100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Negro Ghetto: 90 percent and over Negro; Predominately Negro: 50-89.9 percent Negro; Predominately White: 1-49.9 percent Negro; White Ghetto: less than one percent Negro.

**Suburban areas not tracted until 1940.

Table 2.—RACIAL COMPOSITION OF CENSUS TRACTS,
DETROIT STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA,
1940 - 1960

	CENSUS YEAR			NUMBER OF CENSUS TRACTS		
	1940	1950	1960	Detroit	Suburbs	Total
1.	N*	N	N	31	4	35
2.	W*	W	W	145	78	223
3.	M*	N	N	25	—	25
4.	M	M	N	35	—	35
5.	W	W	N	25	—	25
6.	W	M	M	23	1	24
7.	W	W	M	49	—	49
8.	W	M	N	24	—	24
9.	M	M	M	34	5	39
10.	N	N	M	2	—	2

*Code: "N" indicates tracts with 50 percent or more Negroes (a racial composition that has always meant, sooner or later, total dominance by Negroes). "W" indicates tracts with less than one percent Negro. "M" indicates tracts with 1-49.9 percent Negroes.

Note: All but three of 484 tracts in the metropolitan area are included in this table. The three tracts not included are the two (No. 1 and 507) constituting the Central Business District; and one apartment house district (tract 758) where the number of Negroes hovers just above and below one percent, a shift which—due to the category sizes used for this report—would spuriously suggest racial change.

Reading this table: Line 1 of the table shows that there were 31 Detroit and 4 suburban census tracts, for a total of 35 tracts, which had 50 percent or more Negroes (indicated by the symbol "N") in all three of the census years (1940, 1950 and 1960); Line 2 shows that a total of 223 tracts were less than one percent Negro (indicated by the symbol "W") in all three of the census years; Line 3 shows that 25 tracts were 1-49.9 percent Negro in 1940 (indicated by the symbol "M"), and became more than 50 percent Negro in 1950 and 1960; etc.

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 OFFICE OF STATISTICS, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

TABLE 10
 NUMBER OF JOBS PAID

Year	1920		1921		1922	
	Jan.	Dec.	Jan.	Dec.	Jan.	Dec.
1	10	10	10	10	10	10
2	10	10	10	10	10	10
3	10	10	10	10	10	10
4	10	10	10	10	10	10
5	10	10	10	10	10	10
6	10	10	10	10	10	10
7	10	10	10	10	10	10
8	10	10	10	10	10	10
9	10	10	10	10	10	10
10	10	10	10	10	10	10

The following table shows the number of jobs paid in the United States during the years 1920 to 1922, inclusive. The figures are based on the reports of employers to the Bureau of Economic Research, and are subject to revision.

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