



Isaiah Project Team
Interim Report to the Vestry

**Summary of Learning and Thoughts Regarding Harms
Caused by Racism in Our East Bay Communities**

September 2023

Table of Contents

Preface.....2

1. Introduction.....4

2. Themes From Our Readings.....6

 2.1 Acknowledgement of Native American Land and History.....6

 2.2 California Reparations Commission..... 6

 2.3 Segregation in Housing and Housing Displacement..... 7

 2.3.1 Segregation in Housing.....7

 2.3.2 Housing Disruption and Displacement..... 12

 2.4 Separate and Unequal Education..... 13

 2.5 Violence Against, and Attempted Intimidation of, People of Color..... 15

 2.6 Racism in Environment.....17

 2.7 All Souls Archives..... 18

3. Incorporating Learnings into the Life of All Souls.....22

Preface

There are those who say that instead of being called *Homo Sapiens*, our species should be known as *Homo Narrans*. That is, instead of the wise human, we should be known as the story-telling human. This is because the stories which we tell ourselves form much of the structure, meaning, and identity that create our perception of the world and our place in it. This is the reason that we have held onto the stories of the Christian faith, passing them down from generation to generation. When we tell these stories we remember who we are, and in turn, how we are to live.

For many years at All Souls Parish we have been examining stories of racism. And, the murder of George Floyd in 2020 by a Minneapolis police officer catalyzed a desire to not just simply learn from one another's stories, but to learn more deeply about the origins and effects of racism, what some have called America's original sin. This renewed effort began with circles of learning from the Sacred Ground curriculum, created by the wider Episcopal Church, resulting in All Souls Parish having some of the largest participation of any congregation in the Episcopal Church.

Alongside this learning and re-formation, as part of the preparation for our Living Waters capital campaign in 2022, we recognized a desire to give a portion of the funds raised to the larger community outside of our walls. The watershed moment for this desire came in June of 2022, when the Vestry voted to tithe 10% of the funds raised and to initiate the Isaiah Project to shepherd this process.

The genesis of this initiative was found in the words of the prophet Isaiah, to be “repairers of the breach and restorers of streets to live in.” Not simply a process of determining how the funds would be given away, there was a hope that this could be a way to engage in the work of racial reparations: truth-telling, repentance, amendment of life, healing, and repair.

As part of this process the Isaiah Project team realized the need to learn the stories of the communities that make up and surround All Souls. We realized that in order to participate in the work of repair, we needed to learn more about the breaches themselves. And so we dedicated ourselves to this learning—about the towns and cities and communities that make up the East Bay, and the community of All Souls Parish itself. These stories were often difficult to learn and be reminded of or begin to take in. They are stories of dislocation, exclusion, violence, suffering, and pain. They are also stories of resistance, persistence, courage, strength, and faith. And, for decades, well over a century, they are not often the stories that the dominant voices of our Bay Area have told. More often than not, at All Souls and in the wider dominant culture of white supremacy there has been a legacy of silence.

It is only more recently that more of our collective stories are being told more broadly. Stories about the theft of land and genocide of the native Ohlone peoples, the pervasive systems of separate and unequal education, the systematic exclusion of safe and affordable housing for people of color, the racialized terror against Chinese, Japanese, Black, and Latine Americans, the decades of environmental degradation that has disproportionately affected African Americans. You will find some of these stories in the pages that follow.

It is our belief that the kind of repair and restoration that the prophet Isaiah calls us to, the kind of healing that Jesus the Christ gave and called his followers to offer, it is our belief that this kind of healing can only begin when all of our stories are told. Because only then will we come to know the breaches that exist, the reasons for them, and the ways that we can continue the work of repair.

This report and the process of giving grants to the organizations and people already doing the work of reparations is an important step, but it is just the next step on the collective path of repair and restoration. May it offer you the same opportunity it has offered those of us who have written it: a new understanding of the places we call home, a breaking open of our minds and hearts, and a willingness to do this holy, life-giving work.

The Rev. Phil Brochard,

Rector, All Souls Parish, Berkeley

On behalf of the Isaiah Project Team: Tonantzin Martinez Borgfeldt, Nathan Brostrom, Wendy Calimag, Lewis Maldonado (Chair), Paul Mathew, Mark Mattek, Christine Trost

1. Introduction

The All Souls Vestry voted unanimously, at its May 2022 meeting, to commit a tithe – 10 percent – of the Living Waters Capital Campaign towards community impact projects. The Vestry also asked the rector to recruit a group of parishioners to serve as the Isaiah Project team or workgroup, with the goal of developing recommendations to the Vestry on specific community impact projects. A group of eight All Soulsians, including the rector, have been meeting since late August 2022.

The Vestry offered *Isaiah* Chapter 58 as the primary scriptural foundation for this work, including such verses as the following (58:10 and 12):

“if you offer your food to the hungry
And satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday...
Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
You shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
You shall be called the repairer of the breach,
The restorer of streets to live in.”

In July 2022, the Vestry issued a written charge to the Isaiah Project team, with suggested guidelines that the workgroup should consider in proceeding with its work. The Vestry asked the workgroup to develop a list of no more than three or four focus areas and then to evaluate and recommend to the Vestry a small number of projects within these areas.

In December 2022 the workgroup submitted a report to the Vestry on its work to date. The report recommended to the Vestry that the Isaiah Project concentrate on four focus areas, each of which intersects with racial justice and healing:

1. Children and youth empowerment (with particular emphasis on education, culturally relevant mental health, and fostering community)
2. Housing (with a particular emphasis on the unhoused and those in transition to permanent housing)
3. Native American land and sovereignty
4. Environmental justice (community disparities)

The workgroup supported these four focus areas unanimously with the stipulation that the team is not committing to recommending to the Vestry that All Souls fund four separate grants. After evaluating organizations and the proposed projects submitted for consideration, the workgroup may recommend that All Souls fund three grants instead of four if it determines that somewhat larger grants to three organizations will have a greater impact than grants to four organizations.

This determination to proceed with four grants or three grants will be made after evaluating potential organizations.

The Vestry unanimously approved the workgroup's focus area recommendations at its December 2022 meeting. Since that time the Isaiah Project team has been meeting regularly to determine how best to decide which community projects to support. In connection with that work, we first decided to devote time to reviewing some of the history of Berkeley and our neighboring East Bay communities – from Richmond to San Leandro – which is the geographic scope of our Diocesan Deanery. Specifically, we have tried to educate ourselves about the harms caused by racism in our communities so that we might gain a better understanding of the areas of repair our Living Waters grants might support. In this report we summarize some of the key themes that emerged from our readings on racial harms in our East Bay communities. While much of our focus was on harms caused to African Americans (which the California Reparations Commission has examined in detail, as noted below), we also wanted to educate ourselves about the harms suffered by all people of color in our communities.

We have also been engaging in personal reflection on four areas of inquiry, distilled from a recently published book, [Reparations: A Plan for Churches](#), by the Rev. Peter Jarrett-Schell, an Episcopal priest in Washington, D.C.

Knowing Your Skin in the Game

- Why are you engaging in this work towards racial reparations?

A Community of Support

- Who are your people, the ones encouraging, supporting and challenging you in this work towards racial healing?

Spiritual Grounding

- What are the spiritual practices that keep you grounded, humble, and whole in this work towards racial reparations?

Humility and a Growth Mindset

- How have you responded to missteps in this work towards racial healing? How do you want to respond to the missteps to come?

While we do not view our work as a comprehensive reparations initiative, such as the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland or the State of California have engaged in, we do see the Isaiah Project as an attempt to do the work of repair, as the prophet Isaiah calls for, and to foster racial healing and racial justice. As such, we acknowledge that this work is challenging on many levels and that, as people of faith, engaging with the above questions can keep us grounded. We will share some thoughts about this process at the September 2023 Parish Retreat.

2. Themes From Our Readings

2.1 Acknowledgement of Native American Land and History

In our efforts to learn more about the history of the East Bay communities in which we live, we start with an acknowledgement that most of this land is originally the Native American territory of Huichin, the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo speaking Ohlone people. The Ohlone have lived on this land for thousands of years, hundreds of generations. They did not own the land but rather belonged to it, cultivating reciprocal relationships with the plants and animals with whom they shared the land, and developing cultural practices that kept them in balance.

The arrival of Spanish soldiers and Christian missionaries in the 1500's marked the beginning of a period of colonization and violence against the Ohlone and other Native peoples in California. The missions were essentially Christian forced labor camps, built by slave labor and sustained through brutal physical violence and extractive land practices. With respect to Berkeley, the mouth of Strawberry Creek, near the current Fourth Street shopping area, was the site of a giant midden that had served the Huichin people for nearly three thousand years, living light on the land for all that time. The Spanish sought to undermine this way of life and incorporate the Huichin people into the missions. Instead, with the introduction of new diseases borne by people and livestock to which the Huichin had little immunity, the Spanish effectively eradicated the tribe.

After Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, the new government gave large blocks of land to soldiers in the army, creating ranchos. Many Native peoples were enslaved on the ranchos, constructing houses and working the land. When California became part of the United States, violence against and displacement of Native Americans continued throughout the state. In the East Bay, the Ohlone peoples suffered these injuries. Despite being subjected to slavery, extermination and forced assimilation, descendants of the Ohlone family of tribes continue to reside in the East Bay, protecting and caring for their ancestral homeland and revitalizing cultural practices and spiritual traditions. (See [Sogorea Te Land Trust Web Page](#) and [UC Berkeley's Centers for Educational Justice and Community Engagement](#).)

2.2 California Reparations Commission

As the Isaiah Project team has been engaged in some reading and study about the harms in our East Bay communities, the California Reparations Commission was finalizing its report to the legislature. The Commission, created by the California legislature in 2020, has been engaged in an in-depth study of the harms caused by slavery and white supremacy, including a review of racism in California history, and the preparation of recommendations to the Legislature on what

form reparations for these harms should take. The Commission submitted its [500-page report on June 28, 2023](#). A [74-page Executive Summary of the Report](#) provides a good review of the major themes that emerged from the Commission’s review of California’s history. While the Reparations Commission has a much larger scope than the Isaiah Project, its key findings are instructive since what occurred in our East Bay communities is simply a microcosm of the larger California history.

The Commission, from its review of California history, identified the following key areas of racial injury:

- Racial terror
- Political disenfranchisement
- Housing segregation
- Separate and unequal education
- Racism in environment and infrastructure
- Pathologizing the Black family
- Control over creative, cultural and intellectual life
- Stolen labor and hindered opportunity
- An unjust legal system
- Mental and physical harm and neglect
- The racial wealth gap

Our Isaiah Project readings touched on a few of these themes, particularly housing segregation, separate and unequal education, racial terror and intimidation, and racism in environment and infrastructure.

2.3 Segregation in Housing and Housing Displacement

From our readings, segregated housing in much of the East Bay and housing displacement through redevelopment and transportation projects emerged as important themes. This segregation and displacement affected not only where people could live but often their employment prospects, the education of children, and public health.

2.3.1 Segregation in Housing

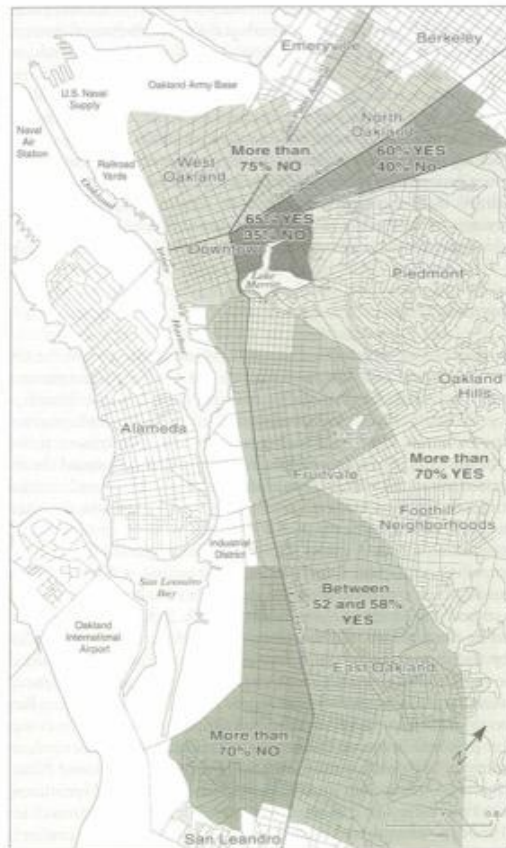
The African American population of Oakland was relatively small in the early decades of the twentieth century. It grew tremendously during the Second World War, with the greater availability of jobs at the Port, in the military and in other government agencies. For example, according to Census Bureau statistics, the African American population of Oakland in 1940 was 8,462; in 1950 it was 47,562; and in 1970 it was 124,710.

Black residents in Oakland settled primarily in West Oakland in the 1930’s and 1940’s. This was an area adjacent to the Port, the railroad, the Oakland Army Base, and various industrial

operations. For many years African Americans were largely prevented from renting or purchasing homes in other parts of the city, although some migrated north into West Berkeley. Gradually, beginning in the 1950's, some African Americans were able to move into part of East Oakland, and that process accelerated in the 1960's. However, the complex discriminatory web of zoning restrictions, restrictive covenants, and redlining by the banking, real estate, and insurance sectors seriously impeded the ability of all people of color to choose where they wanted to live. Even more overtly, the Oakland Tribune published "White Only" real estate listings until 1963.

This segregation not only affected Black residents of Oakland and Berkeley, but also Latinos and Asian-Americans. Anti-Asian prejudice in the East Bay in the 19th century mirrored similar sentiments in San Francisco and around the state, exploiting the labor, particularly of Chinese immigrants, and then blaming them during times of recession and unemployment. Similar bans on housing were extended to Asian-Americans. As a result, by the 1920's, almost all Asian and Black Berkeley residents lived south of Dwight Way and west of Grove Street (currently MLK), with the rest of the city designated as "white" areas. (*Berkeley, A City in History*, p. 35, 82.)

In 1963, the California Legislature passed a Fair Housing bill, also known as the Rumford Act (after its chief sponsor, Byron Rumford, the Assemblymember from Berkeley), which outlawed discrimination in housing. Shortly after its passage, the California Real Estate Association and others put Proposition 14 on the ballot, to repeal the Fair Housing Act. The Oakland Tribune issued a full endorsement of this repeal effort. Proposition 14 passed easily, with 65% of Californians voting in favor of repealing the Fair Housing legislation. In Oakland, the vote in favor of Proposition 14 was 55%. The only areas of Oakland voting against the repeal measure were West Oakland and a relatively small portion of East Oakland.



Map 4.5. Proposition 14 voting results in Oakland, 1964. Expectedly, African American neighborhoods in West and East Oakland voted against the measure overwhelmingly. The map is telling in two additional ways. First, it shows that in neighborhoods where blacks and whites lived in close proximity, the vote was either split or favored repeal of fair housing. Second, it shows that the foothill and hill districts, where very few African Americans lived in 1964, gave the strongest support to the anti-fair housing vote. Cartography Lab, University of Wisconsin.

The California Supreme Court later invalidated Proposition 14, as violating the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, and the U.S. Supreme Court in 1967 affirmed the California Supreme Court's decision. Nevertheless, the fact that Proposition 14 was law for a period of time reveals that, even in the 1960's, notwithstanding the growing strength of the Civil Rights Movement, housing discrimination remained a major obstacle for people of color in the East Bay. (Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* [Princeton, 1983], Chapters 1 and 4; and *The Final Report of the California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparations Proposals for African Americans* [June 2023], Chapter 5 and 6.)

Berkeley also engaged in housing segregation through much of the twentieth century and some of the effects of that institutionalized discrimination are still present today. Housing discrimination in Berkeley took several forms – restrictive covenants, redlining, and zoning. Restrictive covenants were explicit prohibitions in deeds prohibiting the sale of the property to

certain races. Mason McDuffie, one of the premier realty companies in Berkeley, was a leader in developing restrictive covenants.

After restrictive covenants were declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948, redlining and zoning ordinances often played the same role. Redlining refers to the maps drawn by the Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration, federal agencies created in the 1930's to promote home ownership by making and insuring loans. In most cities, including Berkeley, these agencies walled off or redlined certain neighborhoods – typically where people of color lived – and would not make or insure loans in those areas. A glaring example from as late as 1958 occurred when Alfred Simmons, an African American schoolteacher rented a house from his white colleague in the Elmwood district of Berkeley. When the Federal Housing Association, which provided the insurance on the home, was notified of this rental, it notified the white homeowner that his future mortgage insurance applications would be rejected because renting to an African American man was “an unsatisfactory risk determination.” (*Final Report of The California Reparations Task Force* [June 2023], Chapter 1.)

Berkeley also utilized single family zoning as a means of enforcing racial restrictions. The City adopted this type of zoning ordinance for the Elmwood District in 1916, and some believe Berkeley may have been the first in the nation to utilize this tool for this purpose. Mason McDuffie was also a proponent of this approach. “[Berkeley zoning has served for many decades to separate the poor from the rich and whites from people of color](#),” *Berkeleyside*, March 12, 2019.

As a recent City of Berkeley memo from several City Council members proposing a resolution (discussed below) to end exclusionary zoning in Berkeley states: “...the Mason McDuffie Company’s use of Berkeley’s zoning laws and racially-restrictive property deeds and covenants prevented Black, Indigenous, and People of Color from purchasing or leasing property in East Berkeley. “[Memo in Support of Resolution to End Exclusionary Zoning in Berkeley](#),” dated February 23, 2021.

City ordinances in Berkeley, even today, greatly limit multi-family dwellings in certain neighborhoods, such as the North Berkeley hills or Elmwood. The Berkeley City Council is now considering action to change these zoning restrictions. (“[Berkeley may get rid of single-family zoning as a way to correct the arc of its ugly housing history](#),” *Berkeleyside*, February 17, 2021 and “[Berkeley votes for historic housing change: an end to single-family zoning](#),” *Berkeleyside*, March 25, 2021.

Broadmoor Park

Congenial Neighbors

IN a large, rapidly-growing city it is seldom possible to be sure of congenial neighbors. You cannot select your own. But in Broadmoor Park this has been done for you.

The rigid race, color, and building restrictions placed on the property are your protection.

Broadmoor Park offers you many other advantages.

See this most attractive subdivision at once. Take car No. 8 on East Fourteenth Street or drive out East Fourteenth Street to Broadmoor Boulevard, turn left to Warwick Avenue, then right to Broadmoor Park. Or drive out Foothill Boulevard (opposite St. Mary's College site) and turn right down Dutton Avenue to the Tract.

From San Francisco, take Southern Pacific Ferry and Seventh Street electric train, direct to Dutton Avenue at Broadmoor Park. Or call at our East Oakland Office and a salesman will drive you out.

Illustrated folder on request

E. B. FIELD CO.
Owners and Subdividers

Tract Office: Dutton Avenue at Bancroft Avenue
Telephone San Leandro 1137

Advantages of Broadmoor Park—Advertisement No. 4

Advertisement for “exclusive” neighborhood in San Leandro

In neighboring San Leandro, similar discriminatory efforts were common practice - with the city’s proximity to East Oakland being a major factor: “For decades, the 12 politically powerful San Leandro homeowner associations, realtors, and the San Leandro Chamber of Commerce worked to maintain the city as a racially exclusive suburb.” (Redlining and Housing Discrimination in San Leandro, 2022. [Building White Suburbia.](#))

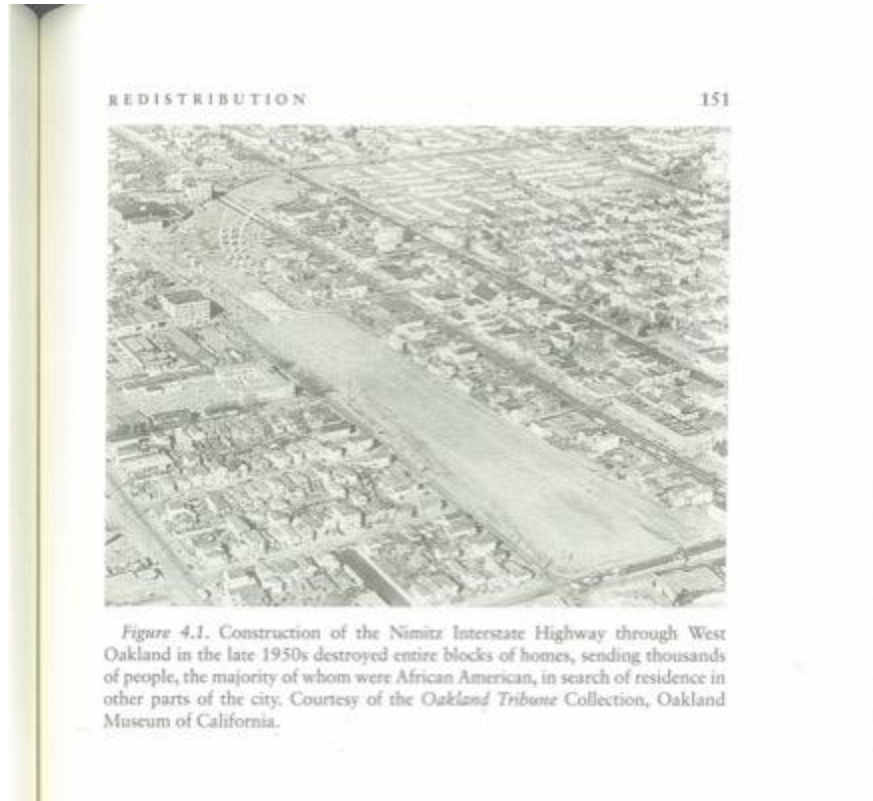
Even after the anti-discrimination housing legislation of the 1960s, in 1970 San Leandro’s white population was 97%, compared to neighboring Oakland at 59.4%. In 1971 the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing (NCDH) filed a report on the city’s discriminatory housing practices, which resulted in the committee requesting the Department of Justice to bring a lawsuit against the city. The next month, the “[Suburban Wall](#),” a televised news documentary about San Leandro’s racist housing practices, aired, further exposing the city’s actions. These events contributed to changes that, while not repairing the city’s racist history and attitudes, did help contribute to what we now see as a more racially diverse community

In the World War II era, Richmond became a hub of the war effort with its industry, especially ship building. This generated a huge influx of workers from all across the country. Richmond’s population quadrupled between 1940 and 1945. The Black population soared from 270 to 14,000. This population growth created an enormous pressure to find housing and the federal government stepped in to create public housing. From the outset, this housing was intentionally and explicitly segregated and highly unequal in quality and quantity for whites vs. blacks, as documented in *The Color of Law*, Ch.1 (ref). This systemic racism and inequality extended across all facets of the housing system. For example: the new Rollingwood suburb, which was

built with federally approved financing, explicitly forbade houses being sold to African Americans; public housing units for African Americans included many doubled up families and illegal sublets; many of them who did not get public housing lived in North Richmond, an unincorporated area that did not have city services; some lived in cardboard shacks, barns, tents and open fields. Black workers who had steady wages at war industries could buy small plots of unincorporated land to build houses, but because the federal government refused to insure bank loans to African Americans, construction was simply unaffordable. When the Ford Motor Company decided to relocate its Richmond plant to Milpitas, union leaders negotiated an agreement to have all current workers including African Americans transferred to the new facility. However, because houses in Milpitas were off limits to black workers, they had to choose between giving up their good industrial jobs, moving to a segregated neighborhood in San Jose, or enduring lengthy commutes from Richmond. A story of a worker named Frank Stevenson highlights this plight. He bought a van, recruited other workers to share the costs, and made the daily drive from Richmond to Milpitas, more than an hour each way, until he retired. Of his carpoolers, only one was able to move farther south, and that only in the 1960s. Only in 1970 was Frank Stevenson finally able to buy his own home in Richmond.

2.3.2 Housing Disruption and Displacement

Housing disruption and displacement among the African American population in Oakland also occurred through several public policy initiatives in the late 1950's and the 1960's relating to economic development and transportation. Specifically, these were: (a) "urban renewal" or redevelopment of Oakland's commercial downtown by expanding into West Oakland; (b) the construction of the Nimitz Freeway (I-880); and (c) the construction of BART. All three of these projects caused the destruction of homes and the displacement of residents in West Oakland. Oakland's Redevelopment Agency destroyed a whole residential section of West Oakland, known as the "Acorn Project." Although initially new homes were promised, the end result was actually the expansion of commercial interests with the goal of increasing the city's tax base. The construction of the Nimitz Freeway in the late 1950's cut through many blocks of West Oakland, destroying the homes of thousands of people, as illustrated in an Oakland Tribune photo from that period.



Finally, the construction of the portion of BART that runs through West Oakland essentially destroyed 7th Street, which was the local business hub of the neighborhood, including Black-owned cleaners, grocery stores, furniture stores, barber shops and similar businesses. (Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* [Princeton, 1983], Chapter 4.)

2.4 Separate and Unequal Education

Segregation in California schools was, of course, ubiquitous prior to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954. Even after that historic ruling, however, separate and unequal education persisted in much of the East Bay, as it did in much of the state. Statewide census data collected in 1966 confirmed that 85% of African American students attended predominantly nonwhite schools, while only 12% of African American students and 39% of white students attended racially balanced schools.

Many of these conditions persist today. The California Reparations Task Force summarized the recent history as follows:

As of 2014, California was recognized as the third most segregated state for African American students, and a state where African American and Latino students are strongly

concentrated in schools that have far lower quality and resources...As of 2020, California remained in the top ten most segregated states for Black students. Approximately 51% of African American students in California attend hyper-segregated 90 to 100% nonwhite schools. (*Final Report of The California Reparations Task Force* [June 2023], Chapter 6.)

Many of Oakland's public schools still suffer from a lack of diversity. Berkeley, by contrast, developed an integrated school system, including the use of busing, as early as the 1960's, and has a considerably more integrated school district.

Efforts to promote racial diversity in higher education in California through affirmative action – and thereby end decades of racial discrimination, have also been reversed. In 1996, California voters passed Proposition 209, a ballot initiative that amended the State constitution to ban governmental institutions from considering race or ethnicity in employment, contracting and public education. The measure passed by a margin of 55% to 45% and represented the first electoral test of affirmative action in the United States. The measure has been challenged repeatedly in courts, but has been upheld as constitutional, including through two separate rulings by the California Supreme Court.

The impact of Proposition 209 was most immediately and profoundly felt in admissions to the University of California, particularly its most selective campuses. Overall UC enrollment of African-American students fell from 4.3% in 1994 to 2.9% in 1998, and Hispanic enrollment from from 15.2% to 11.3% over the same time period. Even more dramatically, enrollment of URM (underrepresented minority) students at Berkeley and UCLA fell by more than 60 percent. A comprehensive study of Proposition 209 found that it has had a persistent and negative impact on graduation rates, graduate school attendance, and income for African-American and Hispanic students. “A detailed look at the downside of California's ban on affirmative action, *New York Times*, August 21, 2020.

In June of 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court effectively dealt a fatal blow nationwide to the use of affirmative action to remedy past racial discrimination in its ruling in [Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College](#). The Court essentially held that race and the barriers of racial discrimination could not be considered by institutions of higher education that are attempting to achieve greater racial diversity and redress past discriminatory practices because to do so would violate the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Justice Sonia Sotomayor expressed her strong disagreement with these conclusions in her dissent to the Court's ruling:

Today, this Court stands in the way and rolls back decades of precedent and momentous progress. It holds that race can no longer be used in a limited way in college admissions to achieve such critical benefits. In so holding, the Court cements a superficial rule of colorblindness as a constitutional principle in an endemically segregated society where

race has always mattered and continues to matter. The Court subverts the constitutional guarantee of equal protection by further entrenching racial inequality in education, the very foundation of our democratic government and pluralistic society. Because the Court's opinion is not grounded in law or fact and contravenes the vision of equality embodied in the Fourteenth Amendment, I dissent.

2.5 Violence Against, and Attempted Intimidation of, People of Color

California, including our local East Bay community, has a long history of exclusion, intimidation and violence against people of color. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, much of this animus was directed against Asian Americans. For example, the Alameda County Chinese, Japanese and Korean Exclusion League was formed with the express purpose of excluding persons of Asian heritage from the United States. An article in the *Berkeley Gazette*, a local newspaper from that era, gives an indication of the strength of this sentiment:

The first big rally of the Alameda County campaign against the Japanese invasion will be held in Maple Hall in Oakland tonight and from present indications the meeting will be largely attended and will be enthusiastic...Efforts will then be made to arouse public opinion to such a pitch as to amount in effect to a practical boycott of all Japanese in the County. (*Berkeley Gazette*, August 14, 1905, from *Berkeley 1900: Daily Life at the Turn of the Century*, by Richard Schwartz [RSB Books, 2000].)

The Oakland Police Department has perhaps the most glaring history of harassment of and violence against people of color, as documented in the recently published *The Riders Come Out at Night: Brutality, Corruption and Cover-up in Oakland*, by Ali Winston and Darwin Bongraham (Simon & Schuster 2023). This history goes back to the late 19th century, when the OPD regularly raided Chinatown and arrested residents and business owners on various charges. Statements by none other than the Mayor of Oakland in 1879, Washburne Andrus, make clear that racism animated these law enforcement actions:

The mayor... advocated that Oakland ban occupations that drew Chinese workers and redline the Chinese out of every neighborhood except the crowded district they already occupied just east of Broadway. "The presence of these people is in every way undesirable and should be discouraged by every legal method, direct and indirect." ...By the early 1900's, reports of Oakland police officers routinely mugging and extorting the Chinese were commonplace. (*The Riders Come Out at Night*, Chapter 5.)

Threats of violence and actual violence against Jews and African Americans and immigrants also have a long history and continue to the present day. In the 1920's the Ku Klux Klan was active and strong in Oakland, and perhaps as many as thirty officers in the OPD were members. Here is one description of its presence in Oakland during those years:

The Klan had a substantial chapter in Oakland, setting up a downtown storefront office in 1921 and hosting huge rallies at Oakland Civic Auditorium by Lake Merritt. More than eight thousand people attended one such gathering in 1925 to watch white-robed Klansmen burn crosses. That same year, two thousand hooded Klansmen in full regalia massed around a ten-foot tall burning cross that lit the night sky a terrifying orange at an admission ceremony for five hundred new members in the Oakland Hills. (*The Riders Come Out at Night*, Chapter 5.)

Another study of the Klan in Oakland summarized its findings as follows:

In the 1920's, the city of Oakland was a center of Klan activity in California. Started in 1921, within three years the Oakland Klan grew to at least 2,000 members. Local Klan leaders enjoyed political success late into the decade, winning an election for county sheriff in 1926 and for city commissioner in 1927. Their power was finally broken in a celebrated graft trial prosecuted by Alameda County district attorney (and later United States Supreme Court Chief Justice) Earl Warren, and the scandal led directly to a major reform of the Oakland city charter. ("White Nativism and Urban Politics: the 1920s Ku Klux Klan in Oakland, California," by Chris Rhomberg, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 17. No. 2 [Winter 1998].)

As the African American population in Oakland grew during and after the Second World War, police violence against African Americans also increased to such an extent that the California Legislature conducted hearings at the Alameda County Courthouse in January 1950. A large number of African Americans attended these hearings and many testified. C.L. Dellums, a Black labor leader (and the uncle of future Congressman and Oakland Mayor, Ron Dellums) testified about the OPD's "lawlessness of the law" and stated that in Oakland, "generally, Negroes regard the police as their natural enemies." Another witness, a local civil rights attorney, testified as follows: "Oakland has the second largest Negro population West of the Mississippi. Yet the Negro citizens of Oakland live in daily and nightly terror of the Oakland Police Department." (*The Riders Come Out at Night*, Chapter 5.)

No real reforms came out of these hearings and the Oakland Police Department's relationship with Oakland's Black population remained hostile and contentious in the succeeding decades. A new low point may have been reached in the 1990's and early 2000's when a rogue group of officers in the OPD – who came to be known as "the Riders" – engaged in repeated excessive violence against Oakland citizens. (*The Riders Come Out at Night*, multiple chapters.) As result of these abuses, the OPD was placed under the supervision of a Federal Judge and a court-appointed monitor in February 2003 and remains under that supervision in 2023, a little more than twenty years later. (*The Riders Come Out at Night*, Chapter 4; "Federal Oversight of the Oakland Police will Continue through at least September," *Oaklandside*, April 12, 2023.)

Perhaps the most egregious example of police violence against citizens of color in Oakland in recent years occurred on January 1, 2009, when a BART police officer fatally shot Oscar Grant in the back while Grant lay prone on the Fruitvale BART station platform. The officer, Johannes Mehserle, was later charged with murder but the jury convicted him of the lesser crime of manslaughter. The strong community response to the killing of Grant was arguably the genesis of Black Lives Matter, which became an important national movement following the vigilante and police killings of Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Philando Castile, Freddie Gray, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. (*The Riders Come Out at Night, Chapter 10*)

2.6 Racism in Environment

The redlining in housing discussed above had the additional negative impact of segregating people of color in neighborhoods adjacent to heavy industry, oil and gas production facilities, and major freeways. For example, West Oakland is located near the port, various industrial operations, railyards, and the convergence of several major freeways. Similarly, people of color living in Richmond and adjacent communities are in close proximity to the various oil and gas operations in the Richmond area. At the same time, these communities have very little access to parks, trees, and green space. Thus, it is no accident that the areas of the East Bay that suffered from redlining, zoning restrictions and other forms of housing discrimination are the neighborhoods that today have the highest levels of pollution.

In Richmond, not only was the housing built for African American workers of inferior quality, as discussed in the housing discrimination section above, but it also was located directly adjacent to “the railroad tracks and shipbuilding areas, subjecting them to particulate matter (e.g., small cancer-causing particles associated with diesel exhaust and industrial pollution...)” while the government built higher quality housing for white workers further inland.” (*California Reparations Commission Report, Chapter 7*)

With respect to Oakland’s history, the Reparations Commission report also noted the following about the highway and public transportation construction through Oakland that we discussed above in the housing displacement section:

From the 1950’s through the 1980’s, substantial freeway construction projects placed substantial pollution burdens on all of the low-lying areas in Oakland, including in the few parks and green spaces available to them. Residents of these areas continue to experience quantifiably greater health consequences such as emergency room visits due to asthma. (*California Reparations Commission Report, Chapter 7.*)

Residents of these neighborhoods historically and to the present day have experienced greater adverse health effects from their proximity to these sources of pollution. In addition to exposure to air pollution, living near concentrated industrial activity and truck and automobile traffic exposes residents to higher rates of lead and other heavy metal concentration in soils found in

playgrounds, backyards, and urban gardens. African American children are three times more likely than white children to have elevated lead levels in their blood. The California Reparations Commission summarized these health effects as follows:

This heavy metal contamination poses a wide array of serious health consequences, including increased susceptibility to asthma, inflammation, pregnancy complications, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, kidney damage... On average, African American Californians breathe in about 40% more particulate matter from cars, trucks and buses than white Californians. African American Californians are exposed to a higher amount of PM 2.5 – fine particles emitted by diesel engines – at a rate 43% higher than white Californians, the highest rate of any racial or ethnic group. (*California Reparations Commission Report*, Chapter 7.)

A contemporary example of environmental racism in our local East Bay communities is the ongoing effort by developers to site a coal export terminal, known as the Oakland Bulk and Oversized Terminal (OBOT), at the Port adjacent to West Oakland. Under this proposal, trains with open cars loaded with coal would pass through Oakland (and other parts of the East Bay) on almost a daily basis. The City of Oakland and most of the West Oakland community are strongly opposed to this proposal. Notwithstanding this strong city and community opposition, the developer has persisted in its efforts and litigation between the parties is currently pending. [“New trial begins in Oakland’s coal fight: What’s at stake?”](#) *The Oaklandside*, July 11, 2023

2.7 All Souls Archives

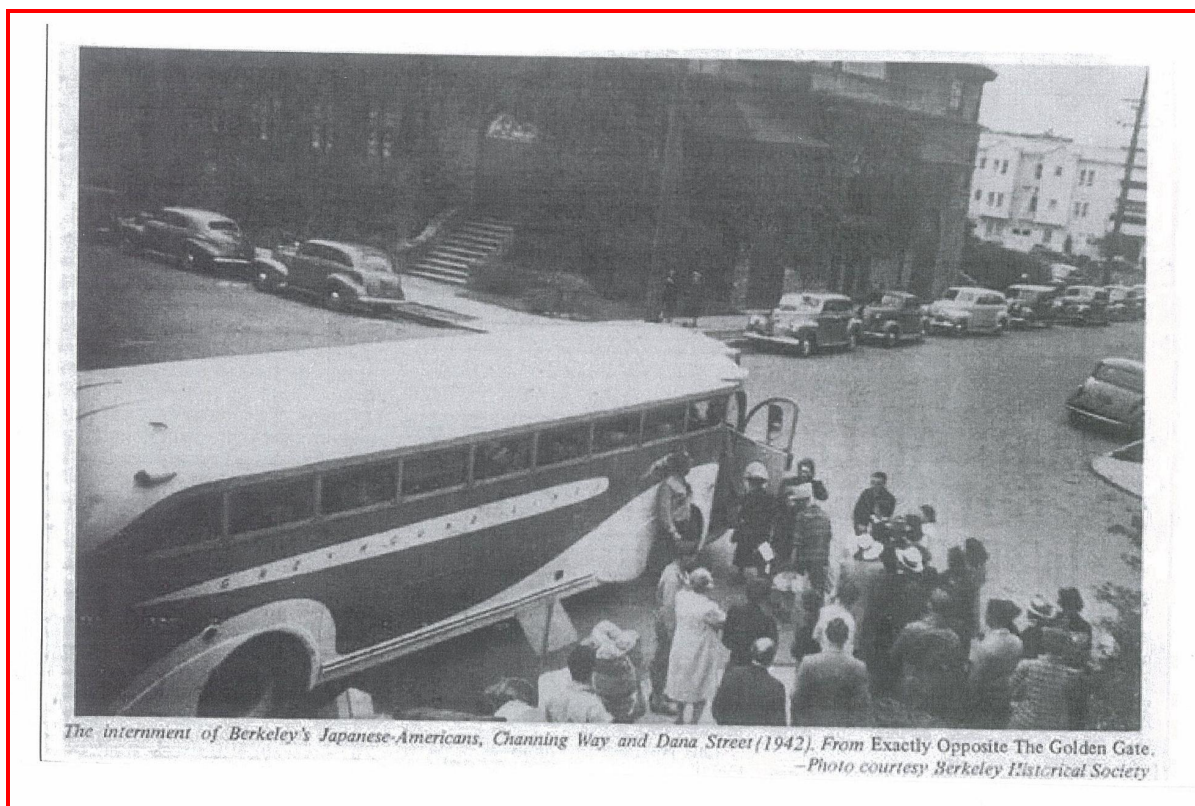
In addition to our review of local history, we spent some time looking at All Souls’ own history to see whether there was any record of how the staff and congregation of All Souls conducted themselves, or responded, in connection with issues of racism and discrimination in past decades. To the extent feasible, given time constraints, we reviewed a large selection of Vestry minutes from the early 1920’s until about the mid-1960’s. The vast majority of this documentation gives no indication of how the All Souls community viewed these issues. However, we found a few entries between the 1920’s and the 1950’s that were of some interest and one group of entries in 1963 and one entry from 1965 that were of particular interest.

In the minutes of the Vestry meeting held on July 10, 1928, there is a reference to a request to rent the Parish Hall every Monday afternoon “for the holding of meetings of the [Daughters of the Confederacy](#), at a rental of \$5 a day.” This organization of female descendants of Confederate soldiers engaged in “the commemoration of these ancestors, the funding of monuments to them, and the promotion of...the Lost Cause ideology and White Supremacy.” These activities included the [construction of a monument to the Ku Klux Klan](#).

The Vestry declined the request. This decision was based on a recent resolution passed by the Vestry discouraging the rental of the Parish Hall. There was no discussion in the minutes as to how the Vestry viewed the substance of the request.

We also note that throughout this period when restrictive covenants and single family zoning laws were being utilized in Berkeley to enforce racial restrictions, we found no discussion in the archival materials we reviewed regarding these Berkeley city actions and how All Souls leadership and congregation may have viewed them and responded to them.

The minutes of the Vestry meeting held on October 9, 1945, about two months following the end of the Second World War, reflect the following action: “At the suggestion of Professor Whistos, this offering taken at the special service on V-J Day had been turned over to some agency to go to the Bishop of Tokyo for rehabilitation work among Japanese children.” What struck us in reading this entry is that during the preceding four years of the War, there is no mention in the materials we reviewed about All Souls’ reaction to the forced detention of more than 120,000 Japanese American citizens in internment camps pursuant to Executive Order 9066 issued by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. At that time Berkeley had a thriving Japanese American community. Approximately 1300 Berkeley residents were sent to internment camps pursuant to this Executive Order. [“Remembering Berkeley’s Japanese community on 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066.”](#) Berkeleyside, February 19, 2017.



The minutes of the Vestry meeting held on May 8, 1951, contain the following entry: “ It was reported with satisfaction that the Rev. M. Sung, formerly Dean of St. John’s College in Shanghai, has been appointed special secretary, for work among Chinese students in this country, thus bringing to fruition a move initiated by our Men’s Club.”

The most interesting and noteworthy action by the Vestry relating to racial justice occurred in the fall of 1963. As discussed above in this report, 1963 was the year that the California Legislature passed the Fair Housing Act, also known as the Rumford Act. Very shortly after its passage, California citizens put Proposition 14 on the ballot to repeal the Fair Housing Law, and Proposition 14 passed by almost a two-thirds majority. Thus 1963-64 was a period when housing discrimination was a central public policy topic in California.

The Vestry discussed this issue at a Vestry meeting held on November 12, 1963. It is clear from the minutes that a member of the congregation had requested that All Souls take a public position opposing discrimination in housing, as reflected in the following excerpt:

The Senior Warden reported on a conference which was held with Mr. Barnwell concerning his letter regarding segregation. Mr. Barnwell has recommended that the Vestry send letters to the Berkeley Realty Board, other realty boards, and to local banks stating that the Vestry of All Souls has no objection to negroes or other minorities renting, buying, or otherwise obtaining or occupying housing in the area served by the Parish.

The minutes from that meeting indicate that “a lengthy discussion” of this proposal followed, after which “Mr. Skidmore was asked to prepare a draft of the letter as discussed for action at the December meeting.” (Vestry minutes, November 12, 1963.)

The Vestry did, in fact, take action at its meeting held on December 10, 1963, as reflected in the following entry in the minutes for that meeting:

The letter regarding segregation as drafted by Mr. Skidmore was discussed and three more minor changes were made. It was regularly moved, seconded, and passed that the letter as changed be sent to the Berkeley Realty Board, local realtors, banks and loan agencies in Berkeley, newspapers, the Diocesan Office and to Mr. Barnwell; letter to be signed by the Rector, Senior Warden and Junior Warden, and attested to by the Clerk. (Mr. Carder advised that it would be necessary to appoint a temporary or Assistant Clerk to attest to the letter as he did not want his name to appear thereon.)”

The letter was prepared and sent. The minutes from the January 7, 1964 Vestry meeting state that the letter “was mailed to 105 realtors, lending institutions and banks.”

One can conclude from this action that at a time when the majority of California citizens were about to vote for Proposition 14, repealing the Fair Housing Law and essentially endorsing housing discrimination and segregation, the leadership of All Souls went on record opposing discrimination and segregation in a public and widely disseminated manner. One can also conclude that such action was to some extent controversial by the fact that the Vestry Clerk did not want to have his name appear on the letter.

One additional item of interest occurred in the Spring of 1965. The historical context is that in March of 1965 a series of Civil Rights marches were held in Alabama, from Selma to Montgomery, to protest the denial of African Americans' right to vote. The most famous of these occurred on March 7, 1965, and is often referred to as "Bloody Sunday." John Lewis and many other marchers were beaten brutally by law enforcement officers when they attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The minutes from the Vestry meeting held on April 13, 1965 contain the following summary regarding the participation of All Souls' rector, the Rev. Bradford Brown, in the march:

The Selma incident, and the Rector's participation, was discussed briefly, in particular the handling of the matter in relation to Vestry responsibility and parish reaction. General comment from various members of the Vestry indicated qualified endorsement of the procedures followed and positive commendation for the Rector's courage and decision to take what he believed to be the right course of action under trying circumstances. The report that St. Paul's Church in Selma allowed an integrated group to worship for the first time, soon after the march and demonstration, was cited as encouraging evidence of the effectiveness of outside clergy participation and support.

In summary, we found our review of the archives helpful in getting some glimpses of how All Souls looked at the breaches and harms and the repairing of those breaches during that portion of our history from the 1920's to the mid-1960's. We recognize, however, that for much of the period we examined there was an absence of information and perhaps a legacy of silence, especially during the earlier periods. We also recognize that in the years following the period we reviewed All Souls has continued to evolve in its views and its actions relating to racial justice and that evolution continues to the present day.

3. Incorporating Learnings into the Life of All Souls

Finally, in addition to the grants that the Isaiah Project team will recommend near the conclusion of our process, we hope that what we have learned through our work can be shared with our congregation as a whole and help our community to move forward with new understandings and new practices related to racial justice and healing. In other words, how can we integrate what we have learned through the Isaiah Project into the life of the congregation – for example, into our community life, our liturgy, the work of our committees? We have not attempted to do that integration work here, but rather believe that it should proceed with further participation by, and conversation within, the congregation, various ministry teams, and the Vestry.