

PEOPLE'S BREAKFAST OAKLAND

Community Learning Program



**Understanding Gentrification & Houselessness
Through a Black Radical Lens**

**FANNIE LOU HAMER BLACK RESOURCE CENTER
MARCH 8 | 2020
12PM**

Purpose of Today

**Insight Into What The Community Learning
Programs Are**

Brief History/Origin Of Pbo

**History Of Gentrification & How It's Currently
Impacting The City**

Next Steps

Community Learning Programs

An initiative from PBO that aims to politically educate our community.



People's Breakfast Oakland

“Nobody in the world, nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of the people who were oppressing them.”

- Assata Shakur

What is PBO?

We are a grassroots community centered group, who strive to consistently provide resources for the houseless community in Oakland.

Inspired by the Black Panthers, we hope to alleviate the immediate needs of Black houseless folks.



Survival Programs vs Charity



The Black Panther Party had over 60 different survival programs

Ensure the survival of the community so that they could one day put an end to the conditions that made survival programs necessary to begin with.

Survival programs differ from acts of charity which center 'good deeds' instead of critically identifying and combating the root causes of inequality

Black Panther's Free Breakfast Program

In 1969, the Black Panther Party began the Free Breakfast program to feed Black kids in the Oakland community.



Why was this revolutionary?

“When Black people seriously organize and take up arms to fight for our liberation, there will be a lot of white people who will drop dead from no other reason than their own guilt and fear.”

— Assata Shakur,

PBO Approach

- We are intentional about how we work within the community. We want everyone we serve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- How we do that:
 - Training volunteers
 - Creating the safest spaces we can for ALL identities
 - Getting quality affordable hygiene supplies
 - Engaging with the people we serve to determine what exactly they need
 - High quality warm food
 - High quality clothing donations
 - Consistency



Up to now

- Started in 2017
- Served over 10000 houseless folks
- Established a core group of volunteers
- Successfully launched tent drives
- Partnered with members of the community to sponsor the program
- Partnered with Freedom Community Clinic and Black Earth Farms

Future Goals

- Expand our reach (take it further than West Oakland)
- Help shape housing policies in Oakland
- Began to implement other survival programs (Earthquake readiness, self defense)
- Do our breakfast program more than once a month
- Integrate political education into our survival programs as the BPP did

Gentrification

1. the recolonization of historically colonized communities. This includes not only the extraction of existing resources and the people that once lived there, but also the implementation of resources that only the settlers and the bourgeois class can access.
2. the process of renovating and improving a house or district so that it conforms to upper class, upper middle-class taste
3. the process of making a person or activity more refined or polite

*The language that is used to define the term makes it clear as day that it has roots in anti-Blackness

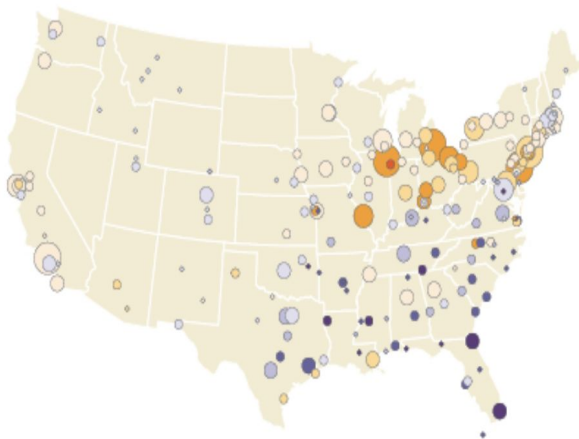
How has gentrification in Oakland impacted poor Black folks in Oakland?

Black people in Oakland

- The Great Migration: Black folks Fleeing the Jim Crow south, ending up in Los Angeles and Oakland

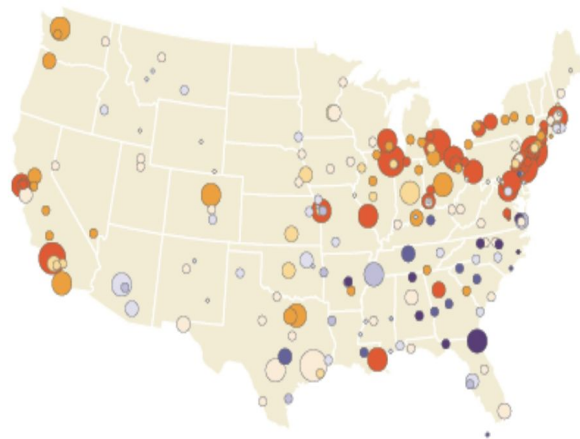
It's a cycle: Our grandparents, our parents, and now us.

The First Great Migration:
1910-1940



The change in share of Blacks in cities is based on the percentage point difference in the percent of population that was Black in the later time period compared to the earlier. For example, 18.3 percent of the population in Gary, IN was Black in 1940 but was just 2.3 in 1910, which represented a 16.0 percentage-point change in the share of Blacks in the city. It was the largest change in share during the First Great Migration. By the end of the Second Great Migration, Newark, NJ had realized the largest increase in Black population share, with the Black proportion of the city rising from 10.8 in 1940 to 54.2 in 1970.

The Second Great Migration:
1940-1970



Increasing

- 10.0 or more
- 5.0 to 9.9
- 2.5 to 4.9
- 0.0 to 2.4

Change in share of Blacks

- 2.4 to -0.1
- 5.0 to -2.5
- 10.0 to -5.1

Decreasing

- Less than -10.0

City population (in later decade)

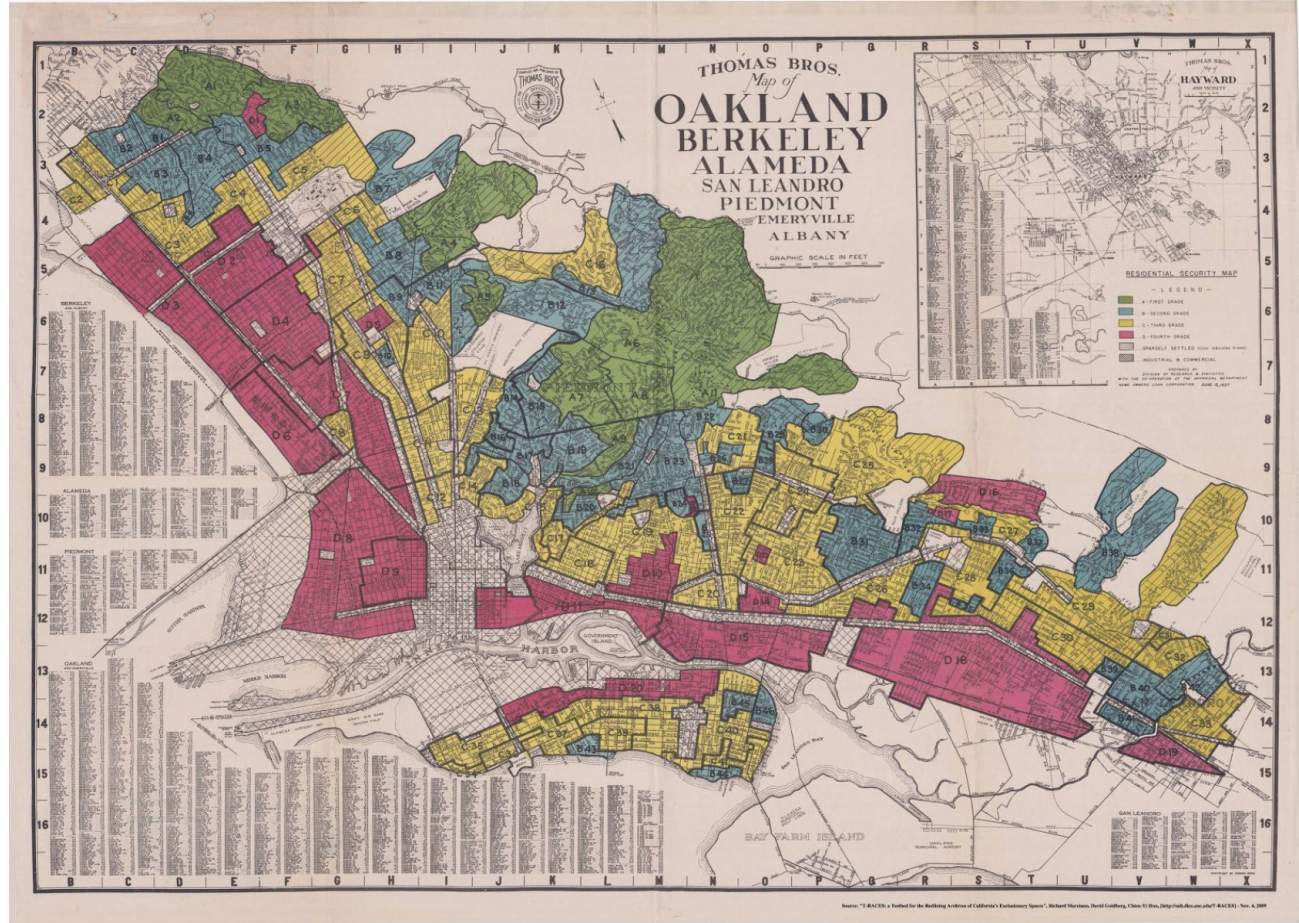
- 1,000,000 or more
- 500,000 to 999,999
- 150,000 to 499,999
- 50,000 to 149,999
- Less than 50,000

Redlining

Segregation of neighborhoods.

GI Bill invested in white communities while Black vets didn't get access. \$33 billion had been handed out to white communities.

Environmental Racism



White Flight

Whites Flight is the relocation of white people from the city to the suburbs to escape the influx of Black folks

Motivated by the thought that:

- Black people in their neighborhood will lead to negative consequences for quality of life
 - “Not as quiet”
 - “Not as moral”
 - “More prone to violence”
 - “Less educated”
 - “Less likely to take good care of their house/yard”
- State sanctioned process

With Gentrification we now see a reverse of this phenomenon with white folks returning to the city and using the same thought processes to instead push Black folks out

Gentrification in Oakland

- **Gentrification -- a war on Black Power**

- Gentrification in Oakland started in early 1970s with removal of Merritt College

Melvin Newton, chair of the Black Studies Department at Merritt and BPP National Minister of Finance: “By definition the hills are white folks country, and unless something is done here, move to the hills may be the death of Merritt.” The Bay Area Rapid Transportation (BART) was also a key part in the extraction of existing resources from the Black community

- BART opened in 1972 and brought devastating effects to the Black community in Oakland. As Robert Self describes in his book on Oakland history, the construction of BART “eviscerated what was left of Seventh Street, once the heart of the city’s black business district.” Again, this is the resource extraction that gentrification commits.

“Progress” & Gentrification

The “advancements” brought by gentrification are not equally shared by the community

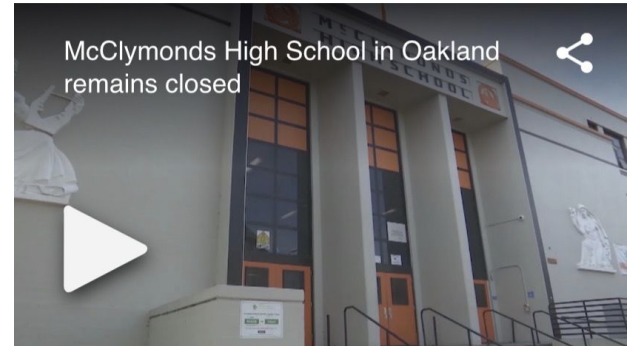
Black Population rapidly declining

Gentrification is not stopping the effects of environmental racism, police brutality etc

McClymonds High remains closed nearly 2 weeks after chemical found in groundwater

Philippe Djegal

1 day ago



Houselessness in Oakland

- California housing crisis
 - highest percentage of unsheltered people
 - Highest number and rate of houselessness
- The issue is not simply funding or policy, the issue is the city and power structure
- Black folks overrepresented in the houseless community
 - 70% of the houseless community but only 24% of the cities population



East Bay Express. Ali Tadayon. 2017

Houselessness and Marginalized Identities

- Ableism
 - Discrimination against people with disabilities
 - Mental health issues are the largest cause of houselessness in Oakland
- Queerphobia
 - 16% of Oakland's houseless pop. identified as TLGBQ+ compared to 5% statewide
 - Trans adults make up less than 1% of California's population yet 13% of houseless folks surveyed identified as trans

The issue affects Black folks of all identities, but the impact is severe among those most marginalized & with the fewest layers of protection

OPD Terrorizing Houseless People

OPD and Public Works evict houseless off of the sidewalk, often destroying all of their belongings



City of Oakland 'Bulldozer' Hit A Homeless Man While He Was Sleeping In A Tent

Debris and garbage is increasingly an issue at homeless encampments. But homeless residents claim that the 'bulldozer' trashed and destroyed their personal belongings and valuables. 'It was horrible, just ridiculous.'

By Nick Miller [@nickmiller510](#)

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Photo By Nick Miller

Gentrification And Other Political Themes

Displacement & Settler Colonialism

- Dates to the origin of this country

Neoliberalism

- “Cities of sites for capital generation” - Taiza. @ColonizedLocal
- Private companies & public responsibilities

Housing as a commodity

- Gentrification presents a new opportunity for white folks to accumulate wealth at the expense of Black neighborhood



Exercise

Action: Break into groups and share some things we appreciate about the community & don't want to see lost to gentrification

Purpose: This work has to be rooted in love, by identifying that love we can ground ourselves in why we have stand against gentrification & in solidarity with one another.

Call to action

Leave the space with at least one new connection. Community is the first step in organizing

Continue to politically educate yourself

Some suggested starting points

- **Noname Book Club @nonamebooks patreon.com/nonamebooks**
- **Hella Black Podcast, @hellablackpod patreon.com/hellablackpod**
- ***Assata: An Autobiography* - Assata Shakur**
- ***Revolutionary Suicide* - Huey P Newton**

Cites and Sources

[Click here](#)