

**Home, Neighborhood, Job: Birthplace and Neighborhood Effects on African American
Occupational Status and Occupational Mobility in World War I-Era Cincinnati, Ohio**

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How might the location of a worker's home affect their work prospects and in particular their occupational mobility? This question arises in the study of African American economic history in a number of ways. As African Americans migrated into Northern US cities in the early twentieth century, settled into developing black communities in those cities, and entered into industrial labor markets, their job prospects may have been widened or narrowed by the influence of either of their "homes" - their place of birth or their new neighborhood. Some researchers have argued that black migrants who came from rural places may have been less prepared for life in the urban North and that their job prospects may have therefore suffered relative to migrants from urban places in the South. Researchers have also speculated about the labor market impact of residence in the growing racially-segregated neighborhoods of Northern cities. Did residence in these areas in the late 1910s have the same kinds of negative impacts on job prospects that have been found for such neighborhoods in more recent times?

In this paper, I examine these issues using a new data set that links African American men in Cincinnati, Ohio from their 1920 US Federal Census record to their World War I selective service registration record. These data provide unique evidence for studying relationships between birthplace, residence, and occupational mobility in this important time period. First, because the data allow us to observe workers at two points in time, we can directly examine patterns of job mobility, rather than inferring patterns from repeated cross-sections and synthetic cohorts.

Second, because some of the selective service records contain detailed information on birthplace, we can examine the effect of urban or rural origin on the occupational status and occupational mobility of black migrants. These issues can not be examined with the Census alone, as the Census contains information on state of birth but not city or town of birth. Third, because this data set is a dense sample from one city, we can compare the labor market outcomes of African Americans living in different neighborhoods in that city. In this case, we can compare the occupational status and occupational mobility of African Americans living in the developing West End ghetto to the status and mobility of African Americans elsewhere in Cincinnati.

While the results presented here should be considered preliminary, they provide some initial answers to these questions concerning the impact of birthplace and neighborhood on the job prospects of African Americans in the late 1910s. Migrants from rural places and migrants from urban places in the South turn out to have had very similar occupational distributions and similar rates of upward mobility in Cincinnati. Further, while residents of the West End were more likely to be unskilled laborers, it appears that they had rates of upward occupational mobility similar to those of African Americans in other parts of the city. Somewhat more surprisingly, West End residents suffered less downward occupational mobility over time than did African American workers in other Cincinnati neighborhoods.

I. The Data and the Setting

The late 1910s were a tremendously important and turbulent time in US labor markets. Between 1914 and 1919, the number of manufacturing workers in the US rose from 6.5 million to 8.4 million as new plants were rapidly built (Nelson 1975, p. 141-42). At the same time, mobilization for World War I and the near total cessation of immigration from Europe restricted the growth of the labor supply. The result was a very tight labor market, intense competition for workers, and a search for new sources of industrial labor. It is in this context that Northern firms

began to recruit black workers out of the South, setting in motion the first wave of the Great Migration of African Americans to the North.

How did these events affect the occupational distribution and mobility of African Americans in Northern cities? The 1920 Census is the primary source of evidence on this question, but it provides only cross-sectional information and does not track individuals over time. No national, longitudinal surveys of individual worker outcomes were carried out in this era. Still, the availability of Census and other manuscripts allows us to construct longitudinal data sets for this period by linking individual workers across different sources. By linking workers from the 1920 Census manuscripts to the selective service registration carried out in 1917 and 1918, we can examine occupational mobility patterns in the midst of this process of industrial expansion and black migration.

The War Department of the US government carried out three waves of registration for the draft during World War I. The first took place on June 5, 1917 and registered all males aged 21 to 30. The second, small wave took place on June 5, 1918 and covered all males who had turned 21 in the previous year. The third and final wave took place just four months later, on September 12, 1918. This registration officially covered all men between the ages of 18 and 45 who had not previously registered for the draft; effectively, this meant that men aged 18 to 20, those who had turned 21 between June 1918 and September 1918, and those aged 32 to 45 had to register. The registration forms changed from wave to wave. They all included substantial information allowing the identification of the individual (name, address, race, year of birth, name and address of next of kin or dependent). The 1917 and June 1918 registrations included detailed information about birthplace. The 1917 and September 1918 registrations included detailed information about occupation (only the June 1918 registration lacked occupation information). This variation in timing and content creates some complications in using these records. In their favor, however, is the fact that registration rates were apparently quite high. Further, the registrant himself reported

the information (and signed the form), which should increase the accuracy of the reporting (Matchette et al, 1995; Deputy et al, 1986).

The records are organized geographically by draft board. Each county had a draft board, and each large city had a board for roughly every 30,000 residents. As there is no national index of registrants, this organization favors a community study framework rather than the creation of a nationally representative sample. Cincinnati, Ohio was chosen as the location for this study. The city had a large black population before the late 1910s and also gained a substantial number of migrants during these years: there were 19,639 African Americans in Cincinnati in 1910 (out of a total population of 363,591) and 30,079 in 1920 (out of a total population of 401,247) (US Department of Commerce 1923, v. 2, p. 51).

As in any community-based study, we need to be aware of how this particular population compared to the nation as a whole. According to 1920 Census figures, Cincinnati's black population was somewhat more likely to be illiterate than was the total Northern black population: 11 percent of black Cincinnatians were illiterate, as opposed to 7 percent of all Northern blacks (ibid, v. 3, p. 34). There is also evidence that occupational segregation was particularly pronounced in Cincinnati relative to other Northern cities, at least in 1940 (Sundstrom 1994, p. 384). While most of the analysis here concerns variation in labor market outcomes among Cincinnati's black population, we should keep in mind that there may have been a lower ceiling on black opportunities in general in this community than in some other places.

The first step in the construction of the linked data set was the drawing of a 1-in-10 random sample of African Americans in Cincinnati from the manuscripts of the 1920 Census. The records from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) 1920 sample for Cincinnati were added to this new random sample (Ruggles and Sobek 1997). All of these records were then linked to the selective service registration records for Cincinnati. The characteristics of the "linkable" set - men of draft registration age - and of the linked set of African Americans are

reported in Table 1.¹ The primary discrepancy between the two sets concerns marital status: linkage rates for single men were noticeably lower than for married men. This reflects the fact that single black men, many of whom were migrants, typically lived alone or with other unrelated individuals. The "next of kin" reported on their draft registration record was unlikely to be living with them either at the time of their registration or in 1920, reducing our ability to identify these individuals based on the names of other family members.² This discrepancy, as well as the overall linkage rate, is no doubt also affected by the in-migration of African Americans between their date of draft registration and 1920.

II. Birthplace, Occupational Status, and Occupational Mobility

For many African Americans who moved from the South to the North in the 1910s, the transition was not just from South to North but also from rural life to urban life. Because the Census did not record detailed information on birth place, it is difficult to know the precise urban/rural mix in the migrant stream. It seems likely that opportunities in Northern manufacturing would have been most immediately attractive to workers with manufacturing experience, who were likely to live in urban areas in the South. Indeed, larger Southern cities like Nashville, Louisville, and Vicksburg experienced substantial black outmigration at this time (Johnson and Campbell 1981, p. 76). On the other hand, some of the migration of the late 1910s

¹ Because the draft records are available only on microfilm and not in machine-readable form, the linking was done by hand. Records were linked based on name, age, race, birthplace, and, perhaps most importantly, information about other family members. See Maloney 2001 for more detail on the quality of the 1-in-10 Census sample, the linking process, and information on white workers linked from the IPUMS records to the draft registration records.

² On the importance of information about other household members in linking projects of this type, see Rosenwaike et al 1998.

was motivated by deteriorating conditions in Southern agriculture, including flooding and the spread of the boll weevil, which would have increased the number of migrants of rural origin (Kennedy 1969 [1930], p. 46-47).

Northern employers were apparently concerned about the rural origins of black Southern migrants and the likely negative impact of such a background on the productivity of these workers, who would be unaccustomed to the conditions of industrial work (Epstein 1969 [1918], p. 34). Northern blacks were also concerned about how rural, Southern-born migrants would adjust to city life. In the words of Richard B. Montgomery, editor of the Wisconsin Weekly Advocate, “We do not ... decry the Northern migration ... but we would impress upon our Southern brethren and sisters to locate in the smaller towns and villages, where they will not be subjected to the same temptations [as in the cities]” (Trotter 1985, p. 31).

In a recent study, Trent Alexander (1998) uses a sample of marriage license applications from the early 1930s to study the fortunes of Southern-born black residents of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, focusing on the effects of rural and urban origin. He finds that black, Southern-born residents of Allegheny County were disproportionately likely to come from urban places (cities and towns of 2500 or more residents) relative to the Southern black population as a whole. Alexander also finds that migrants born in urban places tended to settle in Pittsburgh itself, while those born in rural places (those who listed towns of fewer than 2500 residents or who gave counties as their birthplace) tended to settle in smaller “satellite towns” outside of Pittsburgh. However, among male black migrants living in Pittsburgh, those of urban origin were no more likely to hold skilled jobs than were those of rural origin.³ While one's birthplace may have affected the probability of migration and the choice of destination, it did not affect one's job prospects after reaching that destination.

³ Alexander finds some evidence that female black migrants of urban origin in Pittsburgh were more likely to hold non-domestic jobs than were female black migrants of rural origin.

Using the linked Cincinnati sample, we can examine similar issues for the late 1910s. All of the individuals in our sample lived in the city of Cincinnati both at the time of their draft registration and in 1920, so we can not replicate Alexander's examination of settlement patterns. However, because we have observations of these individuals at two points in time, we can examine occupational mobility as well as occupational status. Table 2 presents the cross-sectional occupational patterns for 1917 and 1920.⁴ Regardless of birthplace, more black men held semiskilled, skilled, or proprietor/manager/white collar jobs in 1920 than in 1917. However, there is no evidence that urban origin (in the South) had a positive effect on occupational status. The share of rural-origin men holding higher status jobs is actually slightly greater than the share of urban-origin men holding such jobs in both years.⁵ Table 3 presents individual-level occupational mobility patterns for workers who had a known (detailed) birthplace and known

⁴ Occupations were coded into broad categories with reference to Thernstrom (1973), Sobek (1996), Edwards (1938), the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (US Employment Service 1939), and the IPUMS documentation (Ruggles and Sobek 1997).

⁵ I use Alexander's definitions of urban and rural: individuals of urban origin listed a city or town of 2500+ residents (in 1910) as their birthplace, and those of rural origin listed a city or town of fewer than 2500 residents or gave a county as their birthplace. Comparing individuals born in cities with 10,000+ residents to those from smaller places produces similar results: individuals from larger cities were no more likely than others to hold high status jobs or to move up to higher jobs over time. The calculations in Table 2 include only individuals whose birthplace could be located in the 1910 Census of Population; nine individuals listed birthplaces that could not be located in the 1910 Census but could be found in more recent sources. Presuming that these towns were rural in 1910 and adding these observations to the above calculations does not alter the patterns of occupational status or mobility. Note that the 1920 occupation status figures include 11 individuals who registered for the draft in June of 1918. This wave of registration recorded detailed birthplace, like the 1917 registration, but did not record occupation at the time of registration. Excluding these observations does not alter the cross-sectional pattern in 1920.

occupations in 1917 and 1920.⁶ Again, there is no strong effect of rural or urban origin on the occupational mobility of these migrants: 22 percent of the rural-born and 19 percent of the urban-born moved up the job ladder between 1917 and 1920.⁷

While these results should be interpreted with caution due to small cell sizes, they appear to corroborate Alexander's findings for Pittsburgh. Black migrants who were born in the rural South suffered no ill effects from these origins in terms of occupational status or occupational mobility, relative to black migrants born in the urban South. While some Northern employers expressed particular concerns about the productivity of rural Southern blacks, it does not appear that they distinguished between rural Southerners and urban Southerners in practice. It is possible, of course, that the work experiences and skills of these two groups of migrants were not as different as their birthplaces might suggest. Migrants from rural places may have moved to Southern cities and gained experience there before heading North. Some rural-born migrants may have gained non-agricultural work experiences even in their home towns, and these individuals may have been the most likely to move North. Examining these issues will require more detailed migration and work histories (which will be tremendously difficult to construct using current resources). Perhaps the most straightforward conclusion to be drawn is that the prospects of most Southern black migrants were limited to a narrow range of unskilled laborer and service jobs. The point

⁶ In this analysis, "upward mobility" includes any move from an unskilled or service position to a semiskilled, skilled, or proprietor/manager/white collar position. Only individuals who held unskilled or service positions in 1917 were at risk for an upward move and are included in these calculations. Redefining upward mobility to include all upward moves (i.e., adding moves from semiskilled to skilled or proprietor/manager/white collar, and from skilled to proprietor/manager/white collar) produces very similar results. Downward mobility is not examined here due to small cell sizes.

⁷ Adjusting for age, literacy, and state of birth within the South (in Kentucky or elsewhere), using a logit framework, produces insignificant effects of rural origin on upward mobility.

may not be so much that rural origins did not harm migrants but rather that urban origins did not help them much.

III. Neighborhood, Occupational Status, and Occupational Mobility

While town of origin appears not to have affected one's job prospects, neighborhood of residence (within Cincinnati) may have. In particular, residence in the developing black ghetto of Cincinnati's West End may have limited one's possibilities in the labor market. Over the past three decades, scholars have been embroiled in debates over how ghettos form (for instance, see Massey, Gross, and Shibuya 1994; Wilson, 1987) and how they shape the economic prospects of their residents (Kasarda 1993; Rosenbaum and Popkin 1993). While most discussion of these issues has focused on the post-1964 era, many authors have at least noted the importance of historical context in the discussion of residential segregation and "neighborhood effects." The ghetto of the 1910s and 1920s may have been quite different from the ghetto of the 1980s and 1990s. Part of the negative impact of residence in segregated black urban neighborhoods in recent times is thought to arise from the lack of connection to job networks and role models in these places, due to the absence of middle-class or professional neighbors. However, in the early part of the century, the black neighborhoods of Northern cities may have been "class-integrated," confining both better-off African Americans and those on the bottom to the same small space. Interaction between these groups may have connected the poor to resources for improving their position (Wilson 1987, ch. 2).

While African Americans of all socioeconomic classes may have lived in close proximity to each other in cities of the early 1900s, there is evidence of tensions within the African American community which might have reduced the beneficial effects of this proximity. These tensions have often been described as occurring along migrant/non-migrant lines, but Trotter (1985, p. 129) argues that they were fundamentally class-based: Southern-born professionals were accepted

by Northern black elites and echoed their criticisms of the working class. These interclass tensions could be seen in the organization of philanthropy within the black community, which tended to focus on "worthy/unworthy" distinctions with regard to recipients (Trotter 1993, p. 77-78). In contrast, other scholars have stressed the importance of community-building efforts among African Americans in this era, at least within the migrant population. Phillips' (1996) study of Cleveland in the 1910s and 1920s notes that migrants from particular towns in the South concentrated in particular neighborhoods in Cleveland, presumably to gain from existing ties and to support each other in resettlement.

Despite the dynamic nature of the forces shaping segregated neighborhoods, we have few direct historical studies of how living in these neighborhoods affected the labor market outcomes of their black residents. One recent study by Collins and Margo (2000) does examine the evolution of the effects of segregation on wages and employment for young black men, using data from the Censuses for 1940, 1950, 1970, 1980, and 1990 (1960 is omitted due to inadequate geographic identifiers). They find that segregation reduced wages for black men in most years. However, segregation was clearly positively correlated with idleness only in 1990 and perhaps 1980. It did not raise rates of idleness in 1940, 1950, or 1970. There is thus some evidence for the argument that the class-integrated ghettos of the earlier twentieth century may not have had the same negative effects on employment as do such neighborhoods in more recent years.

What did residential segregation look like in Cincinnati in the World War I era? Data recently compiled by Cutler, Glaeser, and Vigdor (1999) allow us to track summary measures of residential segregation in Cincinnati and several other cities during these years. As in most Northern cities, black/white residential segregation increased in Cincinnati as large-scale migration began in the 1910s. The Duncan index of dissimilarity for black-white residential

segregation in Cincinnati rose from .47 in 1910 to .56 in 1920.⁸ By this measure, Cincinnati had a moderate-to-high level of segregation in 1920: an index of .56 ranks 14th among 60 Northeastern and Midwestern cities (14th out of 90 cities in the nation as a whole) for which the index can be calculated in 1920. The 21 percent increase in segregation in Cincinnati between 1910 and 1920 ranks as the 11th greatest increase among 45 Northeastern and Midwestern cities (19th out of 65 overall) for which both 1910 and 1920 indexes are available.⁹

This increasing segregation was fundamentally driven by rising racial tensions as the black population of the city grew dramatically, from about 20,000 in 1910 to about 30,000 in 1920. But it was made possible by changes in manufacturing and transportation technology which were

⁸ The index is calculated as $D = \sum_i |b_i - w_i|/2$, where b_i (w_i) is the share of the black (white) population found in a geographic unit i . The index ranges from 0 to 1 and can be interpreted as indicating the share of the black or white population that would have to be relocated to create identical black and white distributions across all geographic units in the city. The unit used here is the ward (Cincinnati was composed of 26 wards in 1920, with an average population of about 15,000). We would generally prefer to use a smaller unit of observation, such as a Census tract, but Census information was not organized by tract before 1940. We might also be concerned that the boundaries of wards are endogenous to the racial and ethnic composition of the population; that is, lines might be drawn specifically to disperse black voters across wards in order to minimize the impact of their votes. However, Cutler, Glaeser, and Vigdor (1999, p. 499) find that in 1940, when both ward and Census tract are available, segregation indexes calculated by either measure produce very similar rankings across cities, though the level of the index is lower for each city when ward is used.

⁹ The extreme values of the segregation index among Northeastern and Midwestern cities in 1920 are for Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with an index of .78, and East Orange, New Jersey, with an index of .18. The extremes in terms of change in the index from 1910 to 1920 are East St. Louis, Illinois, with an increase of 50 percent, and Elizabeth, New Jersey, where the index fell by 20 percent. Cities with 1920 segregation indexes close to Cincinnati's include New York City, Detroit, Michigan, and Flint, Michigan.

rearranging space in Cincinnati and other cities during the era of migration. Improved transportation allowed whites to move up the hills, out of the Cincinnati river basin, and commute to work. Rising rates of home ownership caused a greater share of the population to be attentive to property values and to seek income- and race-segregated neighborhoods for this reason (Taylor 1993, p. 7-8). Land in the river basin began to convert increasingly toward manufacturing and commerce from more mixed residential and manufacturing usage, yet, at the same time, the black residential population of this area skyrocketed (Taylor 1993, p. 177).

Cincinnati's growing African American population concentrated in the city's West End, in wards 16, 17, and 18. The black population of these three wards roughly doubled from 1910 to 1920. By 1920, the district was 37 percent black (when the city as a whole was 7.5 percent black), and just about half of the black population of the city lived in these three wards (Cutler, Glaeser, and Vigdor 1999). As migrants moved to this area during World War I, inadequate residential construction caused rents to increase sharply, leading to overcrowding and deteriorating conditions. The Cincinnati Better Housing League found twenty African Americans living in a three-room flat on Hopkins Street in the West End in 1923, and 94 individuals crowding into a 12 room house on George Street that same year (Fairbanks 1993, p. 196-7). Even as housing conditions worsened, the West End developed the characteristics of the early twentieth-century ghetto: "racially homogeneous, but heterogeneous with respect to class" (Casey-Leininger 1993, p. 235). At the same time, some African Americans with the means to do so headed for other parts of the city or even exited the city altogether. In a few cases, housing reformers and developers aided this movement. For instance, Jacob Schmidlapp's Model Homes Company developed Washington Terrace (in the third ward, in the north-central region of the city) as a planned African American community. Residence in the development required a commitment to neighborhood involvement through "community clubs." In 1919, Schmidlapp reported particularly low rates of residential turnover and of criminal activity among Washington

Terrace residents (Fairbanks 1988, p. 36). In other cases, African Americans developed new neighborhoods on their own by building homes in unincorporated areas. Ultimately, housing reform groups would persuade the Hamilton County government to enact zoning restrictions preventing such piecemeal development (Taylor 2000, p. 53-64).

To document the effects of these residential patterns on the labor market status of African Americans in Cincinnati, we can compare the characteristics and occupations of black West End residents to those of blacks living in other parts of the city. Table 4 presents the distribution of birthplace for African American men in the linked sample, grouped by their place of residence at the time of their draft registration (1917-18) and in 1920.¹⁰ Place of residence is simply classified as "West End" (wards 16, 17, and 18) and "Non-West End," meaning anywhere else in the city. There was clearly substantial residential segregation by birthplace within the black community: blacks born in the South, particularly in states south of Kentucky, were heavily concentrated in the West End, while Ohioans and other Northerners were concentrated elsewhere. Many of the latter lived in the third and fourth wards, in the north-central part of the city (near where Schmidlapp's Washington Terrace was located). These two wards together were about 18 percent black in 1920. Other concentrations of African Americans were found in the first ward, along the Ohio River in the eastern part of the city (four percent black), in the sixth ward on the east side of the central business district (10 percent black), and in the 15th ward, north of the West End (17 percent black). The particular concentration of the Southern-born in the West End did not diminish at all by 1920, even for this group of men who had all arrived in the city by September 1918 at the latest. Moreover, the general concentration of the sample as a whole in the West End

¹⁰ "Ward" is not listed on the draft registration records. It was imputed from addresses and ward maps, and also by comparison to records in the 1920 IPUMS file for Cincinnati.

did not diminish: about 55 percent lived there in 1917-18 and in 1920.¹¹ This stability in West End residence masks a great deal of mobility at lower levels. Just over half of the linked sample changed address during the late 1910s, and 24 percent changed ward. However, only nine percent (17 of 185) of West End residents in 1917-18 left the area by 1920, while twelve percent (19 of 154) of individuals who lived outside the West End in 1917-18 entered the area by 1920.

While the black population of the West End differed from the rest of the city in terms of birthplace, differences in occupational distribution were not as pronounced and may have diminished over time. Table 5 presents information on occupation for the linked sample, for 1917-18 and 1920, by West End residence. In the late 1910s, individuals residing outside the West End were more concentrated in proprietor/manager/white collar, semiskilled, and service work than were West End residents. West Enders were disproportionately represented in skilled blue collar jobs and especially in unskilled laborer positions. By 1920, there was some net movement of West End residents into proprietor/manager/white collar jobs, while African American men in other neighborhoods increased their numbers in skilled blue collar work but saw their numbers in semiskilled jobs decline. West End residents were still substantially more likely to hold unskilled laborer jobs, while non-West Enders were more likely to be found in service work. If we consider unskilled laborer and service jobs together as the set of lowest-status occupations, we find the majority of workers in both areas on this lowest rung. West End residents were more concentrated in these jobs in 1917-18 and in 1920 than were non-West End residents, but the difference was declining. In tracking occupational mobility below, I follow this

¹¹ This share exceeds the West End share based on Census data for the complete black population, which was about 50 percent in 1920. This difference seems reasonable, as the sample includes only men in their 20s, 30s, and early 40s, who were disproportionately likely to be migrants. Migrants were clearly concentrating in the West End.

approach of pooling workers in service and unskilled jobs and calculating movement into and out of this set of jobs.¹²

Were individual residents of either area better able to move up the occupational ladder? Did either group suffer more downward movement? Tables 6 and 7 provide initial answers to these questions. Classifying workers on the basis of their 1917/18 neighborhood, we find fairly similar rates of upward occupational mobility: about fifteen percent of West End residents and twenty percent of residents of other neighborhoods moved up the ladder during the tight labor markets of the late 1910s. Surprisingly, the greater difference between the two areas is found in downward mobility, and this difference favors West End residents: just over 1/4 of West End workers at risk for a downward move actually experienced such a move, while over half of non-West Enders at risk suffered a decline in their occupational status.

Given the observed differences in birthplace between these areas, we should consider whether these patterns in occupational mobility might be altered when we control for individual characteristics. Table 8 presents logit models for upward and downward movement between 1917-18 and 1920. Controls include age (in quadratic form) and Southern birth. I also control for the year of registration, and thus the period of time over which we can observe a job change, in two ways: first, with a dummy variable for registration in 1917, and second, by estimating the model separately for 1918 registrants (who comprise the bulk of the data set). Residence is considered in four categories: whether one was a "permanent" West End resident (that is, in the West End at both observations); whether one started out in the West End but left; whether one

¹² I pool unskilled and service workers in part because it is not clear how these jobs should be ranked relative to each other (though it is reasonably clear that both would be ranked below the other three classes), and in part because this approach is common in occupational mobility studies of this type. Admittedly, combining unskilled and service jobs obscures an occupational distinction between the two areas, a distinction which deserves further investigation.

started out outside the West End but entered; and whether one was a "permanent" non-West End resident (this is the baseline category). Table 9 presents the implied probabilities of upward and downward movement for individuals in each residence category, for each model. It also presents p-values for differences between these probabilities for each pair of residence categories.

None of the control variables have much impact on upward mobility. In the pooled model, there is some evidence that individuals who initially lived in the West End but left by 1920 were more likely to move up than were permanent West End or permanent non-West End residents. This result is driven by a small number of observations, however (only five individuals in the regression sample for upward mobility exited the West End). Between the two largest groups -- permanent West End residents and permanent non-West End residents -- the model predicts about a 5 point difference in the probability of upward movement for a worker of mean characteristics, but this difference is not statistically significant. When we restrict the sample to 1918 registrants, we find no statistically significant differences in upward mobility across residence groups.¹³ The results for downward mobility are more intriguing. Again, in both the pooled model and the model for 1918 registrants, age and birthplace controls have little impact. However, permanent West End residents were only about half as likely as permanent non-West End residents to experience a downward move (the p-value for this difference is .066). When we limit the sample to 1918 registrants, this result is confirmed and strengthened.¹⁴

¹³ There are no West End exiters in the upward mobility regression sample for 1918 registrants.

¹⁴ Linear probability models produce nearly identical results. There is insufficient variation in literacy in the downward mobility regression set to add this variable as a control. Adding literacy to the upward mobility estimation has no substantial impact on the results. Using a more inclusive definition of occupational mobility (i.e., including upward moves from semiskilled to skilled or proprietor/manager/white collar, and from skilled to proprietor/manager/white collar, and including downward moves from proprietor/manager/white collar to skilled or semiskilled, and from skilled to

These patterns of occupational mobility by residence, while somewhat surprising, can be taken as corroborating the notion that the ghetto neighborhoods of the early twentieth century were different from such neighborhoods in the late twentieth century. Even though the West End was infamous for its poor conditions, West End blacks experienced about as much upward mobility as blacks living in more integrated neighborhoods marked by better conditions, and they experienced less downward mobility than blacks in other neighborhoods. What allowed the residents of Cincinnati's West End to move up as often as blacks in other neighborhoods and to move down less often? Perhaps the community-building efforts of black migrants noted by Phillips (1996) enabled West End residents to pool resources in ways that limited declines in occupational status. The specific mechanisms by which this could have been accomplished are not obvious at this point but are worth further investigation.

IV. Conclusion

We have investigated two ways in which "home" may have affected occupational status and occupational mobility for African Americans in one Northern city in the late 1910s. For migrants from the South, we find that individuals with rural origins were not disadvantaged in the labor market relative to those with urban origins. This result runs counter to some contemporary commentary but corroborates Alexander's (1998) findings for Pittsburgh in the 1930s. For African Americans as a whole, we find that neighborhood within Cincinnati may have affected labor market outcomes, but not in the expected way. Black residents of the West End, the city's

semiskilled) produces very similar results. Note that less downward mobility for West End residents is not caused by less risk of downward mobility for West Enders due to lower initial status. Only those at risk for a downward move (those initially in a semiskilled, skilled, or proprietor/manager/white collar job) enter the regression for downward mobility.

growing ghetto, were more likely than blacks in other neighborhoods to hold low-status jobs.

However, they suffered no substantial disadvantage in upward mobility, and they were better able than African Americans elsewhere in the city to hold on to higher-status jobs once they got them.

These results must be interpreted in a broader context. Upward mobility was much less likely for blacks than for whites in Cincinnati in the late 1910s, and downward moves were much more common for blacks (Maloney 2001). Outcomes in Cincinnati may not have been representative of the nation (or the North) as a whole; to know for certain, we will need to construct additional community-level studies. Finally, we can not consider job movement patterns in the late 1910s to be representative of "typical career mobility." Rather, they indicate what was possible for black workers under a special set of circumstances: very tight labor markets, combined with the disruptions of migration, rising racial tensions, and increasing residential segregation. One could argue, though, that there was no "typical" era in African American labor history in the 20th century. Rather, this history is an "unsteady march" (Klinkner and Smith 1999) in which episodes of rapid improvement are bracketed by periods of stagnation and decline. By looking in detail at each step in the march, though, we might better understand the full journey.

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Table 1: Characteristics of Draft-Registration-Age African American Men and of Linked Subsample

| | Black Registration-Age Men | Linked Black Subsample |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Marital Status | | |
| Married | .63 | .73 |
| Single | .33 | .24 |
| Widowed | .03 | .03 |
| Divorced | .002 | 0 |
| Median Age | 32 | 33 |
| Share Illiterate | .09 | .06 |
| Birthplace | | |
| Ohio | .14 | .15 |
| Other North | .04 | .04 |
| Kentucky | .31 | .32 |
| Other South | .50 | .46 |
| Other US | .02 | .02 |
| Non US | .01 | .01 |
| Occupation | | |
| White Collar | .08 | .12 |
| Skilled Blue Collar | .08 | .09 |
| Semiskilled Blue Collar | .09 | .10 |
| Unskilled Blue Collar | .52 | .50 |
| Service | .23 | .24 |
| N | 863 | 349 |
| Linkage Rate | | .40 |

Characteristics for linked subsample reflect their 1920 values. Missing, illegible, and unclassifiable responses were omitted from calculations.

Table 2: Occupational Status by Urban Birthplace, for Black Migrants in Cincinnati

| | Unskilled/Service | Semiskilled/Skilled/ Prop.- Mgr-White Collar | N |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|----|
| <u>1917 Total</u> | 85% | 15% | 80 |
| Rural Birthplace | 82% | 18% | 33 |
| Urban Birthplace | 87% | 13% | 47 |
| <u>1920 Total</u> | 74% | 26% | 92 |
| Rural Birthplace | 70% | 30% | 44 |
| Urban Birthplace | 77% | 23% | 48 |

“Urban:” Born in town of ≥ 2500 residents.

“Rural:” Born in town of < 2500 residents, or gave county as birthplace.

Data set: Southern-born black men, resident in Cincinnati both at the time of their draft registration and in 1920, with known birthplace and occupation.

Table 3: Upward Mobility by Urban Birthplace, for Black Migrants in Cincinnati

| | No Upward Move | Upward Move | N |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|----|
| <u>Total</u> | 80% | 20% | 64 |
| Rural Birthplace | 78% | 22% | 27 |
| Urban Birthplace | 81% | 19% | 37 |

“Upward Move:” 1917 occupation = unskilled/service and 1920 occupation = semiskilled, skilled, or proprietor/manager/white collar.

Data set: Southern-born blacks resident in Cincinnati in both 1917 and 1920, who registered for the draft in 1917, who held an unskilled or service job in 1917 and for whom an occupation was clearly recorded in both 1917 and 1920.

Table 4: Neighborhood Composition, 1917/18 and 1920, Linked Records

| | <u>Share of Neighborhood Residents Born In</u> | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|-------------|----------|-------------|---------------------|-----|
| | Ohio | Other North | Kentucky | Other South | Non-US, Other US | N |
| <u>1917/18 Total</u> | .15 | .04 | .32 | .47 | .02 | 339 |
| West End | .08 | .03 | .32 | .55 | .02 | 185 |
| Non-West End | .25 | .05 | .31 | .37 | .03 | 154 |
| | | | | | | |
| <u>1920 Total</u> | .15 | .04 | .32 | .47 | .02 | 339 |
| West End | .07 | .01 | .33 | .57 | .03 | 187 |
| Non-West End | .25 | .08 | .30 | .34 | .02 | 152 |

West End: Wards 16 to 18.

Set includes all black men linked to their registration record for whom 1917/18 ward could be identified.

Table 5: Occupational Distribution by Neighborhood, 1917/18 and 1920, Linked Records

| <u>Share of Neighborhood Residents Working In</u> | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------------|---------|-----|
| | Prop./Mgr/ White Collar | Skilled | Semiskilled | Unskilled Labor | Service | N |
| <u>1917/18 Total</u> | .10 | .08 | .12 | .47 | .23 | 304 |
| West End | .08 | .09 | .09 | .52 | .22 | 162 |
| Non-West End | .12 | .07 | .15 | .42 | .24 | 142 |
| | | | | | | |
| <u>1920 Total</u> | .12 | .08 | .10 | .47 | .23 | 321 |
| West End | .11 | .07 | .10 | .51 | .20 | 177 |
| Non-West End | .13 | .09 | .10 | .42 | .26 | 144 |

West End: Wards 16 to 18.

Set includes all black men linked to their registration record for whom 1917/18 ward could be identified and who had a classifiable occupation in the given year.

Table 6: Upward Mobility by 1917/18 Neighborhood for Black Male Cincinnati Residents

| | No Upward Move | Upward Move | N |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|-----|
| <u>Total</u> | 83% | 17% | 199 |
| West End Resident | 85% | 15% | 113 |
| Non-West End Resident | 80% | 20% | 86 |

“Upward Move:” 1917/18 occupation = unskilled/service and 1920 occupation = semiskilled, skilled, or proprietor/manager/white collar.

Data set: Black men resident in Cincinnati in both 1917/18 and 1920, who were linked from 1920 to 1917/18, who held an unskilled or service job at the time of their draft registration, and for whom an occupation and a ward were clearly recorded in both 1917/18 and 1920.

Table 7: Downward Mobility by 1917/18 Neighborhood for Black Male Cincinnati

| Residents | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|----|
| | No Downward Move | Downward Move | N |
| <u>Total</u> | 59% | 41% | 88 |
| West End Resident | 73% | 27% | 41 |
| Non-West End Resident | 47% | 53% | 47 |

“Downward Move:” 1917/18 occupation = proprietor/manager/white collar, skilled, or semiskilled and 1920 occupation = unskilled/service.

Data set: Black men resident in Cincinnati in both 1917/18 and 1920, who were linked from 1920 to 1917/18, who held a semiskilled, skilled, or proprietor/manager/white collar position at the time of their draft registration, and for whom an occupation and a ward were clearly recorded in both 1917/18 and 1920.

Table 8: Logit Estimation: Probability of Upward and Downward Occupational Mobility

| | Pooled 1917 and 1918 Registrants | | | | 1918 Registrants Only | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------|
| | Upward Mobility | | Downward Mobility | | Upward Mobility | | Downward Mobility | |
| | Coefficient (Standard Error) | P Value | Coefficient (Standard Error) | P Value | Coefficient (Standard Error) | P Value | Coefficient (Standard Error) | P Value |
| Constant | -3.3297 (3.5181) | .344 | 5.1432 (3.7917) | .175 | -5.3787 (4.0893) | .188 | 6.5935 (4.1227) | .110 |
| 1917 Registrant | -.2048 (.5575) | .713 | -.5379 (.6481) | .407 | | | | |
| Age | .1479 (.2350) | .529 | -.2956 (.2661) | .267 | .2589 (.2634) | .326 | -.3831 (.2882) | .184 |
| Age ² | -.0027 (.0038) | .477 | .0035 (.0043) | .424 | -.0044 (.0042) | .295 | .0046 (.0046) | .317 |
| Southern Birth | .1380 (.5701) | .809 | .9568 (.6767) | .157 | .5154 (.7092) | .467 | 1.2962 (.9463) | .171 |
| Permanent West End | -.4119 (.4392) | .348 | -1.0197 (.5537) | .066 | -.4202 (.5341) | .431 | -1.7122 (.7078) | .016 |
| West End Entry | .6432 (.7000) | .358 | -.5757 (1.3086) | .660 | .3987 (1.2262) | .745 | -.1306 (1.5040) | .931 |
| West End Exit | 1.7950 (1.0207) | .079 | -1.3931 (1.1921) | .243 | | | -.5469 (1.3880) | .694 |
| χ^2 (Likelihood Ratio Test) | 8.34 | .303 | 12.69 | .080 | 2.44 | .786 | 13.76 | .032 |
| N | 197 | | 84 | | 125 | | 61 | |

“Upward Move:” 1917/18 occupation = unskilled/service and 1920 occupation = semiskilled, skilled, or proprietor/manager/white collar (regression data set includes individuals who held an unskilled/service job in 1917/18). “Downward Move:” 1917/18 occupation = proprietor/manager/white collar, skilled, or semiskilled and 1920 occupation = unskilled/service (regression data set includes individuals who held a proprietor/manager/white collar, skilled, or semiskilled job in 1917/18). See tables 6 and 7 and text for additional details.

Table 9: Probabilities of Upward and Downward Mobility, Based on Logit Estimation

| Residence Category | <u>Pooled 1917 and 1918 Registrants</u> | | <u>1918 Registrants Only</u> | |
|--|---|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Upward Mobility | Downward Mobility | Upward Mobility | Downward Mobility |
| Permanent West End | .130 | .283 | .119 | .188 |
| Permanent Non-West End | .184 | .522 | .170 | .562 |
| West End Entry | .300 | .380 | .234 | .530 |
| West End Exit | .575 | .213 | | .427 |
| <u>P-Values for Differences between Residence Coefficients</u> | | | | |
| Perm. West End vs. Perm. Non-West End | .348 | .066 | .431 | .016 |
| West End Entry vs. Perm. Non-West End | .358 | .660 | .745 | .931 |
| West End Exit vs. Perm. Non-West End | .079 | .243 | | .694 |
| Perm. West End vs. West End Entry | .124 | .733 | .506 | .300 |
| Perm. West End vs. West End Exit | .028 | .765 | | .442 |
| West End Entry vs. West End Exit | .300 | .635 | | .837 |

See Table 8 for coefficients. Probabilities calculated at means for regression sample for all other variables.