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Illusory Inclusion: The Underlying Racial Barriers in Civil Defense 1950 - 1965

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History

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Abstract

Between the years of 1950 and 1965, evacuations and sheltering were used to ensure the protection of American civilians from a nuclear threat. However, not all Americans were able to employ these safety measures owing to prominent racial hierarchy within civil defense policy. This thesis explores the distribution, attainability, and utilization of civil defense to and by Black Americans. It examines the demographic, societal, and financial discrepancies between white and Black Americans employing census information, federal documents, and newspaper distribution. Owing to deep-rooted disparities in income between white and Black Americans, demographics, and racial ideals, this thesis argues that Black Americans were largely unequipped for an imminent nuclear attack as civil defense officials focused on providing protection to the white, middle-class, suburban, nuclear family. Inherent racial hierarchy and segregation within the U.S. would remain at the forefront of civil defense policy.

Keywords: Civil defense, evacuations, shelters, racial hierarchy, Cold War, race, anti-Black racism, Black media, nuclear bomb, United States.

Summary for the Lay Person

In this research project, safety measures during a period of potential nuclear annihilation will be examined to better understand if both white and Black Americans had access to life-saving equipment. This thesis examines where white and Black Americans typically resided, their average income, the availability of safety measure information, as well as survey data. The study examines if Americans had knowledge, understanding of, and accessibility to such measures. This thesis will demonstrate that safety measures were largely out of reach for Black Americans. Instead, civil defense officials and the federal government preferred to provide information about and accessibility to safety measures strictly to the white community.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of protecting American citizens from nuclear war accelerated after the successful detonation of the atomic bomb by the Soviet Union in 1949. This event provoked fear amongst Americans that ultimately led the government to reconsider taking necessary safety precautions for the population. Civil defense had existed since the First World War, but was only certified as a federal department during the Second World War. President Truman had initially assigned the responsibility of civil defense to the National Security Resources Board (NSRB) as he believed that, “Under the present circumstances, the essential need of the Federal Government in the area of civil defense is peacetime planning and preparation...rather than the operation of a full scale civil defense program.”¹ However, once the Soviet Union detonated the atomic bomb, Truman faced increasing pressure from local government officials who demanded that the federal government provide direction on how cities could protect themselves from the threat. Additionally, Congress pressured Truman to take more safety precautions for citizens during this period. Indeed, Congressman John F. Kennedy warned President Truman that the United States was essentially setting themselves up for another Pearl Harbor by not establishing civil defense safety protections.²

President Truman was compelled to create the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) in December of 1950 because of the pressure of the Soviets. The FCDA was staffed by both civilian planners and military personnel, and promoted preparedness on the home front by asking citizens to take part in the nation’s defense. As historian Laura McEnaney noted, “This was a paramilitary program, situated between the priorities of the defense establishment and the

¹ Thomas J. Kerr, *Civil Defense in the United States: Bandid for a Holocaust?* (Westview Press, 1983), 24.

² Kerr, 25.

cultural ideals of the postwar home front.”³ Essentially, the FCDA was tasked with militarizing American citizens in a way that made preparedness appear easily accessible and simple to achieve. FCDA officials created a plan that promoted family togetherness to combat the enemy’s nuclear threat.⁴

From the onset of the Cold War, civil defense planners acknowledged that the American population’s fears of the nuclear bomb had to be controlled in order to prevent mass panic. Nonetheless, planners faced a dilemma—they had to provide enough information for citizens to truly understand the dangers of nuclear warfare without increasing anxiety among Americans or inhibiting confidence in the efficacy of civil defense. The origin of the early post-war civil defense planning was created by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey which studied the effects of the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Although this specific survey concluded that civilian protection from these new weapons was important, it also downplayed the effects of radiation in “arguing that ‘only’ 2 to 20 percent of the casualties had been inflicted by this particular effect.”⁵ Nevertheless, the survey provided the necessary justification for a civil defense office. In particular, it recommended the use of evacuations and the erection of adequate shelters for people unable to evacuate from threatened urban areas.⁶

The United States Strategic Bombing Survey ultimately gave rise to another study, titled the *Defense Against Enemy Action Directed at Civilians, Study 3B-1*. This study was published in 1946 and concluded that civil defense was vital to the preservation of civilian life during an attack. *Study 3B-1* recommended a self-help civil defense method whereby individuals were

³ Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2000), 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵ Kerr, 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

responsible for protecting themselves and their property. However, *Study 3B-1* also concluded that the federal government should be responsible for making self-help attainable for citizens.

Specifically, the report suggested that:

[T]his would involve several government programs: a national shelter policy, reserve stockpiles of civil defense supplies, an effective attack warning system, plans for the dispersal of industry and the evacuation of individuals from likely target areas, and training programs in various civil defense activities such as firefighting and rescue work.⁷

Notably, *Study 3B-1* led to the *Bull Report* created by Maj. Gen. Harold Bull, the appointed head of the newly-created Civil Defense Board. The *Bull Report* differed slightly from *Study 3B-1*; whereas *Study 3B-1* had called for the civil defense program to be operated by the military, the *Bull Report* believed it should be run by civilians. Although the *Bull Report* was completed in February 1947, no civil defense actions were taken until the creation of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in 1948.⁸

Russell J. Hopley was the first appointed director of the OCD. At the time, the chief purpose of the OCD was to prepare a civil defense program that, “in conjunction with the several States and their subdivisions, can undertake those peacetime preparations which are necessary to assure an adequate civil defense system in the event of war.”⁹ In October of 1948, Hopley published his findings in *The Hopley Report* and concluded that civil defense must be a joint responsibility between the federal government and the states. The report also described the risk of mass panic amongst the American population in the event of a nuclear attack.¹⁰ The *Hopley Report* further stated that, “Panic arises from fear, but knowledge and understanding help to

⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁹ Ibid., 22-23.

¹⁰ Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and Cold War Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 27-28; Guy Oakes & Andrew Grossman, “Managing Nuclear Terror: The Genesis of American Civil Defense Strategy,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 5, no. 3 (1992), 370.

dispel fear, thus enabling the individual to meet the situation calmly.”¹¹ The *Hopley Report* thus asserted that the best means of preventing the issue of panic before, during, and after a nuclear attack, would be to educate citizens about the bomb and how to protect themselves. Ultimately, The *Hopley Report* advocated for a national public information campaign.¹²

The National Security Resources Board (NSRB) subsequently conducted its own study in 1949, commonly referred to as the *Blue Book*. The *Blue Book* concluded that states should be expected to organize and carry out their civil defense plans with the federal government providing support only as necessary.¹³ Additionally, the study suggested that panic among civilians had to be properly managed to help protect the American people.¹⁴ Notably, the *Blue Book* was particularly concerned with a bomb striking a racially diverse location such as New York City, Detroit, or Chicago, where social tensions and ethnic-based violence could ensue during the post-attack period. Specifically, the NSRB study stated that “it is awesome to reflect on what would happen in one of these cities if colored people and white people were forced into close association in shelters, in homes, and even evacuation reception centers.”¹⁵ Clearly, the NSRB was aware of the potential racial, ethnic, and class conflicts that could occur in the post-attack period.

As a result of the *Bull Report*, *Hopley Report*, and the NSRB’s study, civil defense planners attempted to address and reduce mass panic in the pre- and post-attack period; essentially, planners had to counter American’s belief that it would be impossible to survive a nuclear attack. Consequently, planners developed an emotion management campaign; as

¹¹ Quoted in Oakes, 28.

¹² Oakes & Grossman, “Managing Nuclear Terror,” 370.

¹³ Kerr, 28.

¹⁴ Oakes, 28-29.

¹⁵ Quoted in Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War*, 30-31.

historian Guy Oakes notes, the emotion management campaign would control the information being released about the nuclear threat by promoting civil defense tools to the American people.¹⁶ The campaign would inform Americans about the most imperative information necessary to understand nuclear warfare in order to assist them in selecting and using the resources most useful for their own survival. Additionally, the emotion management campaign provided techniques on how Americans could learn to better control their emotions regarding the potential threat of nuclear war.¹⁷ This information was distributed through literature, such as film, radio, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, and movies.

Background: Fluctuating Civil Defense Measures

Throughout the early Cold War period, civil defense methods constantly changed. Civil defense officials and the President in power at the time considered different safety methods such as federally-funded community shelters, dispersions, evacuations from cities into suburban and rural areas, as well as an individual home shelter program. Each president—Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy—implemented a different method than their predecessor which hindered the ability for one particular civil defense method to fully develop.¹⁸ This impacted Americans preparedness for a nuclear threat, while also confusing many Americans on what their role was within civil defense.

During the early Cold War period, Congressmen and FCDA officials rejected any federal-funded plans for civil defense, claiming that such a program would be too similar to their communist enemy. This was in accordance with the Eisenhower Administration's belief that the cost of a federally-funded national shelter program was too expensive, too communistic, and

¹⁶ Oakes, 36.

¹⁷ Ibid., 37-38

¹⁸ Kerr, 36.

private shelters built in individual American homes were seen as “American-style” militarization.¹⁹ The private shelter policy—along with evacuations—were known as the “self-help” method and helped shift the responsibility from the government to individual Americans. It forced citizens to take civil defense methods into their own hands, taking the financial burden off of the government.²⁰ While the self-help method seemed to steer America away from their enemy’s ideology and helped lower the expense for the government, it created many barriers for disenfranchised groups in American society. Seemingly, this issue did not matter to Truman, Eisenhower, or Kennedy considering that at some point in each of these President’s terms, they all advocated for the individualized self-help method for civil defense.

The first method that President Truman and the FCDA endorsed was the dispersion method. American cities contained large industrial zones with a highly concentrated population—similar to Hiroshima and Nagasaki—and if an enemy bomb were to hit there, it would be catastrophic. This would hinder America’s ability to fight back against the enemy.²¹ Thus, since FCDA officials deemed cities the most prominent target, dispersions were meant to help counter this issue by moving important necessities—such as businesses—out of the city prior to an attack.

When Truman requested funding to disperse federal offices, Congress refused. He had more success when asking for funding to disperse private industrial facilities; however, this process would take years to successfully complete, and, as a result, it was never accomplished.²² Once Millard Caldwell was appointed as FCDA director by Truman, dispersions were replaced

¹⁹ McEnaney, 7.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Kregg Michael Fehr, “Sheltering Society: Civil Defense in the United States, 1945-1963,” *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing* (1999), 145-146.

²² Ibid., 146.

by Caldwell's Shelter Program that was designed to provide shelters for citizens in the event of an attack. Likewise, the Caldwell Shelter Program failed due to the cost.²³

Eisenhower, and his newly appointed director of the FCDA, Val Peterson, deemed dispersions ineffective due to the time constraint. Moving a city and all of its vital businesses out to safer regions would take a lot of time, and time was something that Eisenhower and Peterson believed they did not have as nuclear weapons advanced. Furthermore, Eisenhower and Peterson initially believed a shelter program was also inadequate due to the intensity of nuclear weapons. Peterson believed that weapons were strong enough to turn shelters into death traps for those in cities.²⁴ Peterson criticized the shelter program that Caldwell had endorsed, stating that he believed a bomb could bury those in a subway shelter in New York City, or hit the harbor, creating a tidal wave that could potentially drown those taking shelter.²⁵ In addition, Eisenhower opposed the shelter program due to the cost and the belief that it essentially turned the U.S. into a garrison state. As a result, Eisenhower's FCDA turned to a new plan: the evacuation of "critical target areas."²⁶

While Eisenhower endorsed the evacuation method, during his presidency the Soviets successfully tested a hydrogen bomb for the first time in 1953. This new perceived threat eventually altered the FCDA's civil defense tactics. By the mid-1950s, civil defense officials had become aware of the deadly fallout that would result from a hydrogen bomb, due to a test in the Marshall Islands where fallout from the H-bomb harmfully effected a crew aboard a Japanese fishing vessel. Civil defense officials realized that evacuating a population could potentially

²³ The cost of the Caldwell Shelter Program was \$300 billion in 1950 dollars; Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red*, 94-95.

²⁴ Kenneth D. Rose, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture*. New York: New York University Press (2001), 24.

²⁵ Kerr, 61.

²⁶ Fehr, 149, 154-155.

expose them to deadly fallout. Since the evacuation method was in accordance with the Eisenhower Administration's budget-conscious mind, his Administration continued to promote it.²⁷

Between 1955 and 1958, the dangers posed by nuclear fallout became public knowledge, and thus, Congress put pressure on the Eisenhower Administration and the FCDA to implement some sort of shelter program. During subcommittee hearings on civil defense policy, it became apparent that while evacuations were initially considered the cheaper option in comparison to a federally-funded national shelter program, certain states would be required to spend significant amounts of money to repair roads for the successful evacuation of residents in the event of a nuclear attack. For instance, Massachusetts reported that to improve their roads and widen them for an evacuation to be effective, it would cost about \$650 million.²⁸ By 1958, due to pressure from Congress, the progression of the bomb, and limited warning of an imminent attack, the FCDA appeared to have abandoned the evacuation method and presented the National Shelter Policy.²⁹ Thus, the expense of a federally-funded national shelter program was avoided by the Eisenhower Administration, as the individual shelter program still allowed the federal government to remain budget-conscious and put the responsibility and the expense of shelter construction on individuals.

When Kennedy came into office in 1961, he intensified the shelter policy. In November 1961, Kennedy stated,

The emphasis will be on community shelters, and the information will be made available to the individual as to what he could do within his own home. But the central responsibility, it seems to me, is for us to provide community shelters. It seems—it

²⁷ Kerr, 67, 71.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

seemed the most effective use of our resources and to provide the best security for our people.³⁰

While still promoting private shelters in individual homes, the national community shelter program would provide more security to citizens by constructing community shelters in populated areas. This shelter program would provide fallout shelters—not bomb shelters—protecting citizens from the radiation effects of the bomb and not necessarily the initial blast or subsequent heat. Kennedy’s shelter program received funds from Congress after his successful speech on the Berlin Crisis where he called for a federally-funded national community shelter program to help protect the population. Owing to the crisis at the time, Congress allocated \$207 million to the administration for the necessary identifying, marking, and stocking of buildings.³¹

While Congress allocated the necessary funds to construct a community shelter program, ultimately, the Kennedy Administration was “unable to formulate and promote a coherent shelter program and the experts themselves were deeply divided over the worth of shelters.”³² Prior to Kennedy’s speech, many residents were unwilling to build shelters in their homes. While Kennedy’s speech did spark an increase in individual home shelter building, the number of residents that actually built a shelter was still relatively small. Many residents relied on the community shelters that Kennedy had promised as a method of civil defense, yet by the time the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred, it was revealed to Kennedy that little progress had been achieved in terms of constructing community shelters. Building owners were hesitant to give permission to have their buildings turned into facilities for shelters because they feared losing their property.³³

³⁰ Quoted in Kerr, 125.

³¹ Rose, 37.

³² McEnaney, 37.

³³ Rose, 194-195.

In addition, throughout Kennedy's short term in office, controversy arose over whether residents would allow their neighbours into their home shelters in the event of an attack. The controversy was so prominent that Kennedy even asked for Americans—residents and planners alike—to “concentrate more on keeping enemy bombers and missiles away from our shores, and concentrate less on keeping neighbours away from our shelters.”³⁴ Kennedy continued to focus on implementing a community shelter program rather than hoping that the American public would install their own shelters.³⁵

While all three of these Presidents offered different methods for the safety of their citizenry, there were many flaws in all the policies implemented. Firstly, the individual shelter program had many obstacles as the federal government and the FCDA simply expected that all residents would be able to afford such a costly expense. Would it be possible for working-class residents to afford to build a shelter? Would apartment-dwellers be excluded from safety measures since they would likely be unable to construct a shelter on their property? Secondly, the evacuation policy expected all Americans to have access to a vehicle and/or expected public transportation to be operational to transport those who did not own vehicles. Was there public transportation for all residents who did not own a vehicle? Were marginalized communities living within city limits able to access this public transportation? Would privileged Americans be willing to assist in transporting others during an evacuation? In a period of prominent racism, would Black residents, and other racialized minorities, be left behind during a crisis in order to save white residents?³⁶ Lastly, community shelters seemed the most inclusive for all Americans. However, would shelters be racially segregated? Did racialized minority groups receive the

³⁴ Ibid., 98.

³⁵ Ibid., 98.

³⁶ While other racialized minorities likely faced similar treatment by civil defense officials, this particular thesis will only examine the implications of civil defense on the lives of Black Americans.

same safety measures as white Americans? Would white Americans allow Black Americans to take shelter in their shelters during an imminent attack? These are some of the questions that I will explore throughout this thesis.

Historiography

While scholars have provided significant contributions to Cold War historiography, especially as it pertains to civil defense, much of the literature has overlooked the barriers Black Americans faced during this historic time. The civil defense historiography often fails to address important barriers that prevented minorities from accessing civil defense safety measures, and instead, much of the literature only focuses on the regional barriers such as the urban and suburban differences. While this does provide some insight into the exclusion of minority groups within civil defense, the marginalization of these groups is rooted much deeper in American society. Financial and societal factors need to be examined to obtain a well-rounded picture of civil defense and its exclusions.

Some of the earliest books to discuss civil defense in American society are Thomas Kerr's *Civil Defense in the U.S.: Band-Aid for a Holocaust* (1983) and Paul Boyer's *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (1985). Boyer's book provided a description of "the years when Americans first confronted the bomb, struggled against it, and absorbed it into the fabric of the culture."³⁷ Boyer's chapter, "The Reassuring Message of Civil Defense," provided insight into the early years of civil defense. While informative to the civil defense historiography, Boyer's work lacked information on the intersections of civil defense and geographic location, class, and race. Kerr's work provided

³⁷ Paul Boyer, *By The Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), xx.

significant information regarding the development of civil defense in the late 1940s. His work is imperative to the civil defense narrative as it explained the lifespan, tactics, and implementation of civil defense under Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy. However, similar to Boyer's work, Kerr's book failed to offer a breakdown of geographic location, class, or race. As a result, both Kerr and Boyer's books fell short of providing a full cultural picture of the experiences that disenfranchised groups had with civil defense measures.

Guy Oakes' *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (1994) was the first to acknowledge the experiences of Americans of different classes and races with civil defense. Oakes was the first to establish that lower classes and minority groups likely faced exclusion from civil defense measures and plans, as these were largely directed at white suburbia.³⁸ Oakes' book laid the groundwork for subsequent scholars to further elaborate on working-class, minority groups, and their experience with civil defense measures; this is an area that had not been previously examined.

Perhaps the most important study on race and civil defense is Laura McEnaney's *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (2000) in which she used the FCDA as her main focus and argued that the American family was seen by the FCDA as a "paramilitary unit" in the fight against the bomb.³⁹ McEnaney argued that, "through its home protection programs, the FCDA tried to establish a permanent military presence in the civilian domain by asking Americans to adapt military hierarchies, training styles, and psychologies to their daily rituals."⁴⁰ Ultimately, citizens were expected to "purchase the tools of survival rather than rely on atomic warfare."⁴¹ In the early 1950s, planners feared that if citizens relied on the

³⁸ Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and Cold War Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³⁹ McEnaney, 4-5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

federal government to provide them with protection, “they would think civil defense was unnecessary and therefore not practice it.”⁴² However, the FCDA’s goal of militarizing the private lives of individuals was not entirely successful as many residents did not implement civil defense measures.

Additionally, McEnaney’s work sets her apart from previous scholars in this field as she was the first to provide significant insight into Black and working-class people’s experiences with the accessibility of civil defense. McEnaney’s book described the barriers that confronted working-class and Black Americans in the privatization of civil defense, the potential exacerbation of racial issues in public shelters, the evacuation relocation areas, and the financial disparities in Black communities in contrast to white communities in terms of evacuating. While McEnaney provides an insightful overview of some of the barriers that Black residents and working-class people endured, she does not delve into specific financial, societal, and geographic barriers that limited the ability of these disenfranchised groups to access civil defense for themselves and their families.

In the same year as Laura McEnaney’s book, Andrew D. Grossman published his article, “Segregationist Liberalism: The NAACP and Resistance to Civil Defense Planning in the Early Cold War, 1951-1953,” which contributed significantly to the historiography of race and civil defense. He argued that the Truman Administration successfully established what he coined a “segregationist liberalism.” Grossman argued that the Truman Administration, on the surface, proclaimed the protection of *all* citizens in the event of a war; however, in practice, the FCDA exhibited geographic and racial exclusion.⁴³ The FCDA used geography as a distinguishing

⁴² Ibid., 7.

⁴³ Andrew D. Grossman, “Segregationist Liberalism: The NAACP and Resistance to Civil-Defense Planning in the Early Cold War, 1951-1953,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 13, no. 3 (2000), 479.

factor for determining which residents would receive maximum consideration and protection in the event of an emergency. This ultimately led to the NAACP calling for all Black Americans to boycott civil defense drills, and, consequently, led to half of the Black population accepting civil defense programs, while the other half refused.⁴⁴ Grossman successfully analyzed Truman's FCDA and addressed the issue of segregation within civil defense policies; however, his argument could have been taken further in examining why Black Americans largely were unable to access civil defense.

Grossman expanded his research in his 2001 book *Neither Dead Nor Red: Civil Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War*. Grossman wrote, "The case study I present offers a detailed appraisal of how a federal agency of the state, the FCDA, intervened to change the way the American people saw with their own eyes the destructive capability of nuclear weapons."⁴⁵ The FCDA's goal was to alleviate the fear and reassure residents that the atomic bomb was just like any other weapon. To successfully accomplish this, the FCDA helped establish a fear management campaign, known as the Advertising Council, to sell residents on this new civil defense preparedness program. This campaign "gave the illusion that the government could do something if atomic war came and that individuals could protect themselves and their loved ones if the worst happened."⁴⁶

Grossman dedicated one chapter to race where he argued that the FCDA under Truman called for the protection of all residents, yet, in practice, large groups—mainly racial and ethnic minorities—were ignored. The FCDA ignored urban areas since large numbers of ethnic and religious minorities resided in them. Although Grossman provided a detailed account of the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 478.

⁴⁵ Andrew D. Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red: Civil Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 31.

geographic barriers faced by minorities in terms of utilizing civil defense, he fell short of providing an adequate analysis of other factors that hindered minorities access to civil defense such as societal and financial barriers. Similar to other historians who have touched on the intersection of race and civil defense, much of Grossman's focus merely emphasised the urban exclusion and suburban inclusion.

While Kenneth Rose's *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* (2001) did not take into consideration race and class limitations, he provided valuable insight into the limited amount of people who were actually constructing shelters when instructed to do so. Rose was the first to examine, and conclude, that "most Americans would ultimately object to building shelters," due to the expense and the moral aspects of shelters and each citizen's relationship with their neighbours.⁴⁷ Rose stated, "in the suburbs, families agonized over whether or not to make the considerable investment in a fallout shelter, and how they would feel about shooting less-prepared neighbors who might intrude into their shelter during a nuclear emergency."⁴⁸

Published work from Tracy Davis (*Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*) and David Monteyne (*Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*) both discussed, at one point, racial and class exclusions within civil defense. Both of these works identified that civil defense officials largely targeted white, middle-class citizens, thus excluding Black Americans and those of lower class.⁴⁹ Davis' work provided a comparative study of the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom and their civil defense policies.

⁴⁷ Rose, 10.

⁴⁸ Rose, 2.

⁴⁹ Tracy C. Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*. Duke University Press, 2007, Kindle Edition; David Monteyne, *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011, Kindle Edition.

While her work is imperative to the American civil defense historiography, it did not delve deep into the racism underpinning civil defense. Monteyne's book largely traced the relationship between civil defense officials and architects working for civil defense. While his book focused on the period after the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, it argued that "American citizens' role in civil defense, as in everyday life, would be conditioned by racial, gender, and other identifying characteristics."⁵⁰

One of the most important pieces of work in civil defense historiography that addressed the racial hierarchy that civil defense was built on was Jonathan Leib and Thomas Chapman's article, "Jim Crow, Civil Defense, and the Hydrogen Bomb: Race, Evacuation Planning, and the Geopolitics of Fear in 1950s Savannah, Georgia" (2010). This specific article focused on a segregated city in the south, Savannah, where Leib and Chapman examined racial issues within civil defense planning, more specifically, within evacuation relocation areas. Under Eisenhower, the FCDA implemented the evacuation policy whereby individuals were expected to evacuate once they heard the air-raid alarm sound. Since individuals were expected to evacuate, civil defense officials ensured that the relocation sites maintained segregation and racial hierarchy. Leib and Chapman argued that while Southerners were afraid of the bomb, they were also fearful of the integration of white residents and Black residents, and, therefore, believed that even during a nuclear threat, racial hierarchy must remain intact.⁵¹ Leib and Chapman's article is fascinating, and the topic of racial segregation deserves further examination in other regions within the U.S.

⁵⁰ Monteyne, 67.

⁵¹ Jonathon Leib and Thomas E. Chapman, "Jim Crow, Civil Defense, and the Hydrogen Bomb: Race, Evacuation Planning, and the Geopolitics of Fear in 1950s Savannah, Georgia," *Southeastern Geographer* 51, no. 4 (2010).

Methodology—Synthesis

This study will focus on the early Cold War years, more specifically, the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy years. Within these thirteen years, civil defense policies changed between dispersion, evacuation, private shelters, and community shelters, all of which created barriers for Black Americans and other minorities. This study will examine the types of barriers that hindered the ability of Black Americans to attain and utilize these safety measures. I argue that, in the period of Jim Crow and prevalent racism, civil defense officials and the federal government had no intention of helping provide civil defense measures to Black Americans. Indeed, civil defense measures were created to protect the ideal American family: the white, suburban, middle-class, nuclear family. Those that fit into this category were able to evacuate, build private shelters, or utilize community shelters, while those who did not, such as Black Americans, were left to fend for themselves. This was not to say that all Black Americans were unable to access civil defense measures; however, a larger percentage of Black residents were unable to obtain these safety measures as they faced prominent societal, financial, and demographic hindrances that were deeply rooted in American culture. In many ways, the federal government never stepped in to assist Black Americans, especially in places such as the housing market where Black Americans faced racial covenants that limited their ability to purchase homes in areas less likely to be struck by a nuclear bomb such as the suburbs. On average, Black Americans made significantly less money than the average white American. This was a hindrance to their ability to purchase civil defense material to help protect themselves. American society was not built, and not interested in changing, to provide Black Americans with the same resources and opportunities as white Americans.

As a backdrop to my research, I consulted a variety of primary sources. I examined newspapers from five different regions across the U.S. to provide a sample snapshot of civil

defense information distribution inclusive of North, East, West, and South regions of the U.S. In each of these regions, I focused on one particular city and chose a newspaper that catered to the Black population, as well as one that catered to whites, in an effort to explore any differences that this media provided to their readership in terms of civil defense information. These newspapers included the *Alabama Tribune* and the *Montgomery Advertiser* based out of Montgomery, Alabama; the *California Eagle* and the *Los Angeles Times* based out of Los Angeles, California; the *Chicago Defender* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune* based out of Chicago, Illinois; the *New York Age* and *The New York Times* based out of New York City, New York; and *The News and Observer* based out of Raleigh, North Carolina, and the *Carolina Times* based out of Durham, North Carolina.⁵² Additionally, in order to corroborate my conclusion that the FCDA's information was largely targeting the white population, I also consulted FCDA and OCDM pamphlets and films.

Further, I consulted census information to analyze the number of Black residents and white residents who owned and rented their homes. This information highlighted how many homes in each state contained basements, an essential building block for shelters, and the average income of Black Americans in contrast to whites.

Federal documents conducted by the FCDA and the OCDM were also consulted for this thesis. These documents varied; these sources provided survey information that the FCDA/OCDM conducted by surveying the American population at the time. Much of this information provided insight into who was more likely to believe, access, and utilize civil

⁵² I was unable to find a Black newspaper online that was based out of Raleigh, North Carolina. I was also unable to find a white newspaper online from Durham, North Carolina. However, since Raleigh and Durham are within close proximity (about a thirty minute drive from each other), I used *The News and Observer* and the *Carolina Times* as they likely would have published similar information.

defense information. This information assisted in my analysis of who civil defense officials were targeting with their information.

CHAPTER ONE: EVACUATIONS

Background: the FCDA and Eisenhower

During the 1950s, the United States government's civil defense strategy fluctuated as the Presidency, Congress, and the staff at the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) changed over time.⁵³ In fact, only six weeks prior to the beginning of the nuclear age, the Truman Administration prematurely disbanded the Office of Civil Defense in June of 1945 because Truman believed there was little chance of an attack on U.S. soil.⁵⁴ Remarkably, Truman did not acknowledge the importance of civil defense until the testing of the first Soviet atomic bomb in late 1949.⁵⁵ Somewhat unwillingly, the Truman Administration created the FCDA in 1950 which was intended to provide states with the supplies, equipment, information, and funding to develop their own civil defense organizations and carry out civil defense measures.⁵⁶ Notably, the Truman Administration continually changed civil defense measures, shifting between dispersion, evacuations, and shelters. Dispersion was the main civil defense method advocated by the Truman Administration in the 1940s; however, moving businesses and people out of metropolitan areas would have cost billions of dollars.⁵⁷ The Truman Administration finally settled on shelters as being the best method for survival, yet the Administration never helped fund or provide any resources to states to build shelters, rendering them ineffective as a civil defense tool during the Truman years. Evacuations as a civil defense method were not seriously considered until the election of President Eisenhower in 1953.⁵⁸

⁵³ McEnaney, 7.

⁵⁴ Dee Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon: Why Civil Defense Never Worked* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 32.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁷ The dispersion method required families, factories, and businesses to relocate out of the city well before a nuclear attack, while evacuations were meant to move people out if they had heard of an incoming attack.

⁵⁸ Garrison, 39.

The Truman and the Eisenhower Administrations had different reasons for their initial support and reconsideration of evacuation as a civil defense strategy. A key reason why the Truman Administration eventually ruled out evacuation was because the Administration believed that citizens would ultimately receive insufficient warning to evacuate in the event of an imminent attack. Moreover, the FCDA had to direct evacuees to safe locations which created the problem of identifying relocation areas. Owing to certain cities being identified as ‘critical target areas,’ the only viable option was for evacuees to relocate to suburban and rural areas that were in close proximity to the city.⁵⁹ Civil defense officials believed that these areas were far enough away from the initial blast of a nuclear bomb if one were to strike a city, but close enough for citizens to successfully relocate there prior to a strike. However, this would likely pose a major impact on white, middle-class suburbanites and rural citizens as they would be tasked with supplying evacuees with vital necessities if they allowed evacuees to stay in their homes. As a result, civil defense authorities under President Truman ultimately resorted to bomb shelters as the best means of survival. While bomb shelters became the FCDA’s new official policy, they did not receive the necessary funding from Congress. For three years, Truman’s FCDA spoke of civil defense resources while the funding that was required to help implement civil defense was withheld. Consequently, civil defense measures were at a stalemate during the Truman years.⁶⁰

Beginning in 1953 with the election of President Eisenhower, the FCDA and the Advertising Council created a media campaign to promote evacuation as the best means of survival for Americans.⁶¹ The campaign advertised in newspapers, radio, and television

⁵⁹ By 1954, 42 cities were considered “critical target areas.” These “critical target areas” consisted of 62 million people; McEnaney, 49.

⁶⁰ Garrison, 41.

⁶¹ The Advertising Council was tasked with creating techniques to encourage citizens to take part in civil defense preparedness; see, Andrew D. Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red: Civil Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 18.

advertisements to inform the public how to respond in an imminent attack. Should an air raid alarm sound in a city, people were instructed to get into their vehicles or take public transit to evacuate. Americans were told to head towards the suburbs and beyond where they were to be taken in and cared for by suburbanites and rural citizens who were supposedly ready to house and feed them.⁶²

During Eisenhower's presidency, a number of important changes in technology occurred that significantly altered civil defense. In 1954, the first successful detonation of the hydrogen bomb occurred; by 1955, radioactive fallout had become public knowledge; and, by 1957, the Soviet Union had developed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) which clearly impacted the warning period for successfully evacuating an entire city in the U.S.⁶³ Despite these changes, evacuation remained the leading civil defense measure from 1953 to 1957. After 1957, both shelters and evacuations would be promoted as tools for civil defense.⁶⁴

The FCDA-created bomb shelter proposal ran counter to the advice of many top officials in the Eisenhower Administration, chiefly because of financial reasons.⁶⁵ Building a national bomb shelter program would be a tremendous expense; consequently, Eisenhower favoured the evacuation strategy as a more inexpensive method. Additionally, Director Fredrick "Val" Peterson of the FCDA endorsed a mass evacuation plan as he had a reputation as a budget-conscious Republican, which is likely why Eisenhower appointed him as Director.⁶⁶ Moreover,

⁶² Eric Stephen Singer, "Saving City X: Planners, Citizens and the Culture of Civil Defense in Baltimore, 1950-1964," PhD Dissertation, American University (2012), 141.

⁶³ Kerr, 59.

⁶⁴ It is worth mentioning that shelters became more popular towards the end of Eisenhower's presidency as hydrogen bombs became bigger and more powerful. For a time, shelters and evacuations overlapped as leading strategies; in the late 1950s, both were implemented as civil defense measures in some capacity. However, this chapter will specifically look at evacuations as a civil defense method.

⁶⁵ "Civil Defense and Homeland Security: A Short History of National Preparedness Efforts," *Homeland Security National Preparedness Task Force*, (2006), 11.

⁶⁶ Fehr, 155.

Peterson believed that owing to the tall buildings closely packed together in metropolitan areas, a bomb's effects would be quite dramatic causing structures to crumble and bury any person taking cover in a shelter. As a result, the shelters previously advocated for by Caldwell would be rendered ineffective as they would essentially become death traps: "shelter occupants might survive the initial explosion and still never see daylight again."⁶⁷ Furthermore, the detonation of the first hydrogen bomb by the Soviets in 1953 altered many of Eisenhower's FCDA officials' thoughts on evacuation as the best civil defense strategy. The effects of a hydrogen bomb explosion would be devastating—catastrophic, in fact, if one exploded in an American city.

It was not until the detonation of the largest American hydrogen bomb in 1954 that changed the course of the nuclear era that FCDA officials were forced to reconsider the effects of the bomb. "Bravo," as it was named, was the largest hydrogen bomb up to that point in history.⁶⁸ "Bravo" was detonated near Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The analysis of the effects of "Bravo" acknowledged the harmful impact of this explosion on twenty-three unsuspecting crew members aboard a nearby Japanese fishing vessel known as the *Lucky Dragon*.⁶⁹ The nuclear fallout from the *Lucky Dragon* incident taught the FCDA of the threat not just to ground zero, but to anyone within reasonably close proximity of ground zero. In 1955, the FCDA issued an "advisory bulletin" which "demonstrated that no one in a downwind strip 140 miles wide and 20 miles from ground zero could have survived more than twenty-four to forty-eight hours without protective measures."⁷⁰ In addition, the creation of ballistic missiles proved that warning time for civilians would be miniscule, thus, civil defense officials pondered the question of how much

⁶⁷ Ibid., 154-155.

⁶⁸ Garrison, 51.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 53.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 60.

warning time they would have to evacuate a city.⁷¹ However, the FCDA asserted that the effects of “Bravo” helped validate their proposed evacuation policy, declaring shelters ineffective due to the destructive capacity of the hydrogen bomb. Consequently, Director Peterson continued to implement evacuations as the primary civil defense policy. He claimed that there was no alternative; shelters were simply death traps for citizens if a hydrogen bomb were to hit.⁷² Notably, the FCDA was in a constant battle with Congress for funding to sustain itself during the early stages of the nuclear era. Since an evacuation policy was the most fiscally responsible civil defense measure up to this point, this corroboration also helped convince Congress to release the necessary funding.⁷³

In 1954, the FCDA determined that forty-two cities were considered “critical target areas,” consisting of approximately sixty-two million lives at stake and required these areas to evacuate when there was an imminent nuclear threat.⁷⁴ On the surface, evacuation seemed like a feasible idea, particularly given the impact of the Eisenhower Administration’s and the FCDA’s joint media propaganda campaign of the time. Nevertheless, for any evacuation to be a success, residents required enough warning to be able to move out of the highly concentrated downtown city core to the suburbs and beyond. Additionally, suburban residents were expected to take in anyone fleeing from the inner city and temporarily house, feed, and provide medical care for them.⁷⁵ Since racialized groups, especially Black Americans, often resided in the downtown core, tensions could arise in moving racially diverse populations to predominantly white areas during a period of historical segregation. Jim Crow was alive and well during the 1950s, since

⁷¹ Ibid., 60; Sharp, 207.

⁷² Rose, 24.

⁷³ In hindsight, the evacuation policy had inherent flaws due to the H-bomb and the development of ICBMs; however, this thesis will specifically focus on the flaws which impacted the lives of Black Americans.

⁷⁴ McEnaney, 48.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 49.

these laws were not defeated until 1965. Hence, when adding race into the mix, evacuation as a civil defense policy for all Americans was a very difficult task. While the FCDA never stated this overtly, Black residents faced delimiting factors combined with social, financial, and demographic components that would have prevented many from being able to evacuate. When the FCDA implemented evacuations as the primary civil defense policy under Eisenhower, it appeared that neither Eisenhower nor the FCDA had considered that Black Americans would be at a disadvantage in successfully evacuating during an attack. Moreover, the FCDA did not provide Black Americans with the necessary resources or information to enable them to evacuate, thereby contributing to persistent inequality that would prevent their very survival in the event of a nuclear attack.

Black Americans' Accessibility to Vehicles for Evacuation

As a civil defense strategy, evacuation exposed deeply rooted racial inequality. For instance, successful evacuation from an urban centre during a nuclear threat required either ownership of or access to a vehicle. This excluded poorer Americans who relied on public transportation or traversing on foot, many of whom were Black Americans. In 1955, during the height of popularity of evacuations as a civil defense policy, the average income for a white American family was \$4,613; conversely, the average income for a Black American family was only \$2,544.⁷⁶ Similarly, only 25.7% of white American families earned under \$3,000 a year in 1955, while 57.3% of Black American families made under \$3,000. As income levels rose,

⁷⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, *Money Income of Families and Persons in the United States*, no. 105 and 157; *Money Income of Households, Families, and Persons in the United States*, no. 162, 174, and 180; *Money Income and Poverty Status in the United States*, no. 166 and 168; and *Income, Poverty, and Valuation of Noncash Benefits*, no. 188. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index.

fewer Black Americans were represented in these income groups.⁷⁷ This income gap demonstrates the financial disadvantage suffered by Black Americans relative to their white counterparts.

Due to this income inequality, many Black Americans living in urban centres could not afford the vehicles required to evacuate quickly. In 1947, a new vehicle cost an average of \$1,864; by 1960, this number jumped to \$2,853.⁷⁸ That said, on average one could expect to pay around \$2,000 for a vehicle and since the average income for a Black American family was \$2,544, Black Americans would have had a difficult time financing one. The average white American family, in contrast, made almost double the salary of Black Americans. Owing to the financial disparities between whites and Blacks, it is apparent that Black Americans would have had a more difficult time purchasing a new vehicle with which to evacuate. This could potentially have had a detrimental impact on their ability to evacuate. Although used cars were a potential option for Black Americans, they could pose problems in terms of repair and maintenance costs. While used cars could be as cheap as \$200—a much more budget-friendly price than a brand new vehicle—Black Americans (more specifically in the South) would also have to navigate a whole new world of racism to utilize this resource in the event of an attack. In the post-war period, it was not uncommon to see segregated gas stations—where Blacks were unable to refuel their vehicles—and, more importantly, discriminatory vehicle insurance policies and traffic safety laws that perpetually favoured white Americans. Black Americans throughout the entire country were considered “at fault” by insurance companies for vehicular collisions that they were involved in. As a result, many insurance companies across the nation held racist views

⁷⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Series G-1-415, *Percent Distribution of Families and Unrelated Individuals, by Race of Head, by Money Income Levels: 1947-1970*.

⁷⁸ Paul Lienert, “The True Price of Buying a Car,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 16, 1996.

and refused to insure Black American drivers.⁷⁹ These barriers would intensify throughout the decade as the fight over segregated transportation accelerated.⁸⁰ Since evacuations relied on people having access to automobiles and Black Americans faced barriers to obtaining a legal vehicle, it is probable that they would be less inclined to take part in evacuating during a mock drill or an attack. The FCDA was either ignorant of this socioeconomic disparity or did not value Black lives enough to think it warranted discussion.

During Eisenhower's presidency, the University of Michigan conducted a 1954 survey of the likelihood of a respondent's evacuation in response to a perceived threat or mock drill. Although the study did not consider race, it did collect data on car ownership. The survey revealed that owning a car or having other means of transportation at one's disposal increased the likelihood that people living in cities would be able to evacuate. However, the study also found that those without cars generally chose to stay at home rather than try to evacuate.⁸¹ Without cars, many low-income households, including large numbers of Black American families, did not have the means to follow civil defense instructions, nor the means to participate in mock evacuations and drills. They were unable to become prepared for what to do in the event of a bomb threat or attack.

By 1956, another University of Michigan survey found that ninety percent of people polled believed that shelters were a more practical civil defense initiative than evacuation.⁸² While this survey did not provide any sociodemographic information, the data nevertheless shows that a majority of the people either did not believe they had the means to evacuate in the

⁷⁹ Mia Bay, *Travelling Black: A Story of Race and Resistance* (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 128-129.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁸¹ Stephen B. Withey, "Survey of Public Knowledge and Attitudes concerning Civil Defense: A Report of a National Study in March, 1954," *Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan* (1954), 114, 116.

⁸² McEnaney, 64.

event of a nuclear threat or simply did not believe that evacuating would provide adequate protection from a nuclear attack. In spite of this data, the FCDA did not completely modify their tactics in the years following the study. In fact, the FCDA continued to support evacuations as it was deemed the most effective protection and most cost effective strategy against a nuclear attack.

Mock Drills: Black American's Participation and Knowledge

Throughout the Eisenhower years from 1954 to 1961, the FCDA staged yearly nationwide mock evacuation drills. These drills were part of a program called "Operation Alert," which provided Americans with the opportunity to practice civil defense measures.⁸³ Although all Americans were expected to evacuate during these drills, motivating the public to participate was particularly difficult. Many of the "Operation Alert" drills consisted of mock evacuations by automobile, such as "Operation Walk Out," "Operation Rideout," "Operation Greenlight," and "Operation Scat." These FCDA drills had two purposes. First, they ensured residents were familiar with evacuation protocols in the event of a nuclear attack. Second, they also gave defense authorities insight into the complicated logistics of transporting vast numbers of people out of cities, including their arrival at reception areas, suburban support for housing, food offerings, and public cooperation.⁸⁴

One prominent example of these drills was "Operation Walk Out," which took place in Spokane, Washington in April of 1954. This drill had been heavily advertised in the media and differed from previous drills because residents were asked not to use their own mode of transportation, but to walk instead to a designated area where they would be escorted out of the

⁸³ Ibid., 50.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 51.

city in buses supplied by civil defense authorities in Spokane. This mock evacuation targeted those who lived in the downtown area where there was a large concentration of Black Americans. Although official reports did not reference any racial conflict, it is possible that some racial tension occurred simply given that Spokane is predominantly white, and racism was prevalent in housing, public facilities, employment, and schools within Spokane.⁸⁵

A second example of these evacuation drills in Washington State was “Operation Rideout,” which occurred in the city of Bremerton in June of 1954. Much like “Operation Walk Out,” “Operation Rideout” was heavily advertised in the newspapers, radio and television. However, instead of authorizing residents to take public transportation out of the city, this evacuation drill asked people to evacuate using their own automobiles and to offer rides to those without one. “Operation Rideout” was unsuccessful in that many people did not participate. Despite this, civil defense authorities justified the drill noting that it promoted evacuation protocols that would be useful in the event of a real nuclear attack.⁸⁶ Civil defense officials saw Bremerton as a critical target area due to its naval base and geographic location on the West coast. Given its relative proximity to the Soviet Union, civil defense officially recognized that cities on the Western coast were larger targets than cities elsewhere in the country.

National Academy of Sciences’ (NAS) observers in Bremerton during the mock evacuation drill noted that Bremerton’s inner-city had a high Black American population.⁸⁷ The NAS further observed that a nuclear attack would likely be directed at the heavily industrialized part of the city, which is also where many Black Americans lived and worked. Consequently,

⁸⁵ Tracy C. Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense* (Duke University Press, 2007), Kindle Edition, 3166; Dwayne A. Mack, *Black Spokane: The Civil Rights Struggle in the Inland Northwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), Kindle Edition, 188.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Black American residents should have received priority in these evacuation drills since they were also the most likely to die from a nuclear attack.⁸⁸ However, official reports did not state the degree to which Black Americans participated in, or abstained from, the mock evacuation. Nonetheless, since Black Americans were less likely to have access to a vehicle relative to their white counterparts, it is possible that large numbers of Black Americans did not participate.

Other evacuation drills continued throughout the West coast. For instance, “Operation Greenlight” took place in September 1955 in Portland, Oregon. This drill successfully evacuated 100,000 residents out of the city centre using a combination of transportation supplied by civil defense authorities in Portland and personal automobiles with motorists offering rides to people on foot.⁸⁹ While official reports did not disclose any racial tensions, it is worth noting that Portland was a heavily segregated city in the mid-1950s. In the 1940s, many Black Americans had moved to Portland from the South to pursue jobs in the ship building industry.⁹⁰ This resulted in a major backlash from white Portlanders. Segregation laws created a large racial divide as Black residents were barred from many white buildings and areas.⁹¹ By the 1950s, Black Americans only comprised about 2.5% of Portland’s population, while white Americans made up 96.4%.⁹² However, the majority of these Black American residents lived in a part of Portland known as the Albina district, sometimes described as “the black ghetto.”⁹³

Consequently, it is possible that at least some white motorists did not assist in offering rides to

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Devin Cameron, “Laughing at Bombs: An Ideological Analysis of the 1957 U.S. Civil Defense film *A Day Called X*,” PhD Dissertation, Oakland University (2017), 15.

⁹⁰ Portland Bureau of Planning, “The History of Portland’s African American Community (1805 to the Present),” (1993), 59.

⁹¹ Ibid., 60.

⁹² U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population: 1950, Series P-D63 *Characteristics of the Population, by Census Tracts: 1950*, vol. 3, chapter 63, (1952).

⁹³ Stuart Mcelderry, “Building a West Coast Ghetto: African-American Housing in Portland, 1910-1960,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 92, no. 3 (2001), 143.

vehicle-less Black Americans. Like “Operation Rideout” in Bremerton, it is also possible that many Black Americans did not participate in the drill.⁹⁴

Although NAS reports do not discuss racial discrimination in any of the West coast drills, either due to exclusion or because NAS observers deliberately avoided reporting it, it is significant that official NAS reports do describe the racial discrimination that occurred during a mock evacuation in Mobile, Alabama. This drill was part of an FCDA-led analysis of Black American participation during these evacuations. “Operation Scat” was completed by NAS observers, albeit white observers, to determine the accessibility of civil defense strategies. Conducted in 1954 in Mobile, Alabama, “Operation Scat” was a large mock evacuation to determine if the people of Mobile were prepared for a nuclear threat. Specifically, the drill focused on evacuating the downtown core, which contained both lower-class and lower-middle class residents. Mobile then had a population of 129,000 adult residents, 35% of whom identified as “non-white.” These minority groups typically resided in the business district and industrial areas that made up the downtown core.⁹⁵ The overall purpose of the evacuation drill and corresponding study was to determine how those in the urban centre of the city responded to mock evacuation orders.⁹⁶

To advertise the evacuation drill, civil defense agents contacted Dr. Gray, a superintendent of the “Negro High School,” and asked him to distribute information from the Mobile Civil Defense Agency to the Black community. This was problematic from the start as Dr. Gray was not well-regarded in the Black community; instead, his appointment was the result of his ties to the white community. Since Dr. Gray was not respected in the Black community,

⁹⁴ Cameron, 15.

⁹⁵ McEnaney, 189.

⁹⁶ NAS, “Report on ‘Operation Scat’: A ‘Drive Out’ Evacuation of a Part of Mobile, Alabama,” 1.

many community members did not receive the information from civil defense officials largely because this information was simply not allocated to them. Consequently, the majority of Black residents were oblivious when the evacuation alarm went off. This resulted in false rumors spreading that an actual atomic bomb was going to land in their community to prevent desegregation of city schools, or to push Black people out of their homes while civil defense officials put poisonous gas in their vacant homes to prevent the Black community from returning.⁹⁷ These rumors were never confronted by the FCDA officials, nor discredited, leaving many Black people in Mobile alarmed and confused.

Throughout the evacuation drill, participant observers examined resident behaviour. The final reports further confirmed that the majority of people living in the downtown industrial core, the area most likely to be affected by a nuclear attack, did not own cars. One observer in particular noted that the area he observed was lower-class where at least half of the people that were evacuated “did not have any kind of transportation available other than public transportation.”⁹⁸ This was true for all lower-class areas that were located in the industrial areas. Moreover, these neighbourhoods were populated predominantly by Black Americans. In another instance, a participant observer encountered a Black teenager and asked him why he was not evacuating. The boy replied that he was staying home during the drill because his family did not own a car.⁹⁹ Although people in Mobile could use public transportation for the mock evacuation and supposedly for an imminent attack, “Operation Scat” provided evidence to civil defense officials that reliance on public transportation in an official evacuation for Black residents was much more difficult to utilize. Buses were overloaded with residents attempting to evacuate the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁸ NAS, “Report on ‘Operation Scat’, Participant Observer ‘J’”, 2-3.

⁹⁹ Ibid., “Report on ‘Operation Scat’, Participant Observer ‘D’”, 2.

city which caused many residents to be left at the bus stop, rendering buses ineffective overall.¹⁰⁰ Thus, it is plausible to assume that during a period of prominent racism and segregation, white residents would be prioritized as citizens boarded public transportation. As the buses filled up, Black Americans would likely be left behind, perhaps even removed from a seat if a white person wanted it.¹⁰¹ In addition, the most common public transportation available to the population of Mobile was the city bus system which cost money to use. One Mobile newspaper, for example, published an advertisement stating that buses would charge all riders during the mock evacuation drill.¹⁰² Since Black Americans tended to make less money relative to white Americans, this was another financial barrier hampering their ability to evacuate, or, potentially influencing their decision to not partake in such a drill due to financial cost.

The NAS report on Operation Scat noted that civil defense officials required daily newspapers in Mobile to publish reports about the drill for thirty days preceding the evacuation. This was accompanied by television and radio announcements. Still, many Black communities did not receive this information because they either did not read, watch television (perhaps many could not afford one), nor listen to the radio outlets chosen by civil defense officials to disseminate information. Notably, many Black Americans in this area were reported to be either illiterate or semi-literate which further contributed to the Black community's lack of participation in and understanding of what was happening during the mock evacuation.¹⁰³

Civil defense officials instructed and expected the people of Mobile to offer a ride to any person they saw walking during the mock drill. This had little success overall as many cars,

¹⁰⁰ One case in particular showed that a bus coming back into the city was so full that about 1,000 to 1,500 people were passed up and left at the relocation area; NAS, "Report on 'Operation Scat'", 9.

¹⁰¹ NAS, "Report on 'Operation Scat'", 9.

¹⁰² "City May Set U.S. Pattern on Evacuation," *The Mobile Register*, June 13, 1954.

¹⁰³ NAS, "Report on 'Operation Scat'", 3.

whether occupied by Black or white residents, left town only partially filled and most did not stop to help anyone, of any race, evacuate.¹⁰⁴ One participant observer asked a police officer during the mock drill if a white person would stop to help a Black person evacuate the city in a real emergency, to which the officer replied that he was opposed to the idea of white people mixing with Black people. After further questioning by the participant observer, the officer conceded that he would only help a Black person if there were no other Black people in the city able to help them evacuate.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, it would seem that some white residents of Mobile were reluctant to help Black residents evacuate.

The NAS report was crucial in highlighting that civil defense authorities had been unaware of the extent to which Black Americans remained in place during mock evacuations that were supposedly designed to help save all lives. In addition to the fact that the Black community lacked sufficient information about the drill, civil defense authorities also failed to consider that most Black residents did not own vehicles nor did authorities provide additional public transportation. Overall, the Black community was clearly disadvantaged. Seemingly an afterthought for civil defense authorities, it is both plausible and likely that Black Americans would have been unable to escape and left to fend for themselves in the event of a nuclear attack. The FCDA and civil defense authorities in Mobile failed in their task to ensure that all residents of Mobile both understood what was happening and had the necessary resources to evacuate the city during the mock drill.

According to the NAS document, a contributing factor to the exclusion of the Black community in these evacuation drills was economic class. While civil defense authorities disseminated information to media outlets to help inform the public about evacuations, NAS

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., “Report on ‘Operation Scat’, Participant Observer ‘D’”, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., “Report on ‘Operation Scat’, ‘Participant Observer S’”, 5-6.

observers reported that civil defense officials did not consider class differences in how news is consumed. The NAS observers stated that Black Americans in Mobile, Alabama were likely to be illiterate or semi-illiterate hindering their ability to be reached by the most common mass media communication program—the newspaper.¹⁰⁶ Since a 1955 U.S. Census reported that the majority of Black Americans belonged to either the lower class, or the lower-middle class, NAS observers' conclusions appear legitimate.¹⁰⁷ In addition, a key factor that authorities did not consider is that Black Americans often read different media sources than their white counterparts. Essentially, they tended to rely on media outlets that were written, edited, and created by other Black Americans. Although civil defense authorities in Mobile stated that evacuation notices were published or announced in all Mobile media outlets, it does not appear like many Black newspapers distributed this information, as my research turned up only one article about Operation Scat in a Black paper, namely, the *Mobile Weekly Advocate*.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, the business and industrial areas of the city were typically home to poorer people who were mostly Black citizens and mostly illiterate or semi-literate. According to the NAS study, much of the information failed to reach these people as many did not own a radio or television, and many did not purchase newspapers.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, this impeded their ability to learn about the mock drill, and could potentially affect their ability to learn of a real nuclear

¹⁰⁶ NAS, "Report on 'Operation Scat,'" 3.

¹⁰⁷ In 1955, the U.S. census recorded zero percent of Black Americans in the highest income group of over \$15,000, while 1.8% of white Americans were in this income group. The middle income group of \$7,000 to \$9,999 only had 3.1% of the Black American population in it, compared to 13% of white Americans that made that much income. From this census, it is evident that Black Americans tend to fit into the lower income groups, and therefore the lower class or the lower-middle class compared to their white counterparts; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Series G-1-15, *Percent Distribution of Families and Unrelated Individuals, by Race of Head, by Money Income Levels: 1947-1970*.

¹⁰⁸ During my research, I found only one Black newspaper that published information on 'Operation Scat.' This particular article provided a small paragraph stating that a film on 'Operation Scat' was shown. Where this film was shown is unknown; however, the articles stated that the film provided information on safety measures for an imminent attack; "Council School News," *The Mobile Weekly Advocate*, March 26, 1955.

¹⁰⁹ NAS, "Report on 'Operation Scat,'" 3-4.

threat in the future. Moreover, due to extensive segregation, the Black community was also less likely to hear this news from white residents. The failure of civil defense authorities to ensure that Black Americans had access to information about the mock drill contributed to the Black community's lack of participation in the drill, and, in fact, it is likely that many did not even understand it. As a result, Black residents would have been significantly disadvantaged in the event of a real, imminent attack.

Although the FCDA stated incessantly that their information was being distributed and received by all American families across the country, in actuality, Americans often ignored civil defense information and direction. In 1954, when evacuations were the primary civil defense strategy, a survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan found that people living in cities were more likely to stay at home than evacuate (88%).¹¹⁰ Crucially, many of these residents were Black Americans. In the 1940s and 1950s, Black Americans were attracted to Northern cities as these rapidly growing centres offered work opportunities in construction, retail sectors, and manufacturing causing many Black Americans to transition away from agricultural jobs that dominated the Southern U.S. in favour of living and working in cities.¹¹¹ More specifically, a much larger percentage of Black citizens (approximately 77%) resided in cities compared to white Americans (approximately 56%) in 1950.¹¹² Thus, it is apparent that a high percentage of the University of Michigan's finding that 88% of people living in cities would not evacuate during a nuclear threat were Black Americans. However, it is important to recognize that the Black community's non-compliance was almost certainly attributable to their lack of knowledge about civil defense strategies.

¹¹⁰ Withey, 110-111.

¹¹¹ Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton University Press, 2005), 30.

¹¹² *United States: Population Inside and Outside Central City or Cities of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, By Race: 1900 to 1960*, table 1.

Nevertheless, even if Black Americans had participated in these drills in higher numbers, the FCDA seemingly ignored some obvious flaws in their evacuation plan. The evacuation strategy relied on evacuees from the city travelling to suburbs where suburbanites would welcome them and provide accommodation, meals, and vital supplies.¹¹³ However, even disaster researchers hired by the FCDA noted that this plan was defective and that relying on suburbanites to allow evacuees to stay in their homes could cause tension.¹¹⁴ Considering how segregated cities were, having Black evacuees take up residence in white suburban homes was bound to create a worse situation especially during a period of racial tension. In fact, suburban areas had been created in large part to continue segregating Blacks from whites. Many new suburban homes were, by covenant and/or in practice, only sold to white buyers during the 1940s and 1950s, which excluded Black Americans even if they had the financial means to afford a house in the suburbs. This caused further racial segregation between cities made up of largely poor Americans, many of them Black or from racialized immigrant groups, and suburbs where white, middle-class families lived.¹¹⁵ Thus, according to historian Patrick B. Sharp, white Americans often associated the city as a place where “savage” people lived and, “to live in the city was to brave the threatening mix of foreign cultures and non-white races that festered in its heart.”¹¹⁶ Many white families decided that the best way to escape the “savagery” of the city was to move to the suburbs where they could be isolated from poorer and non-white groups.¹¹⁷ This segregation and racism made it unlikely that suburbanites would welcome Black American

¹¹³ Tristan Miranda Williams, “Surviving Fallout in Appalachia: An Examination of Class Differences within Civil Defense Preparation in West Virginia During the Early Years of the Cold War,” PhD Dissertation, Marshall University (2017): 21.

¹¹⁴ David Monteyne, *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011), Kindle Edition.

¹¹⁵ Sharp, 176.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 175-176.

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth Ewen, *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened* (Basic Books, 2001), 179.

evacuees looking for a safe place to relocate during a nuclear attack. In an interview, a disaster researcher under contract to the FCDA stated that “some Midwestern suburbanites” were so hostile to urban evacuees during a nuclear attack that they would “get machine guns... to keep those people from using up our children’s food and water.”¹¹⁸ Though this is not representative of all suburbanites, it is conceivable that many feared that the resources they had amassed for their own families would be used to sustain evacuees who were strangers from the “savage” city. Racial tensions surely contributed to Midwestern suburbanites’ lack of support for this plan. Additionally, Black Americans and other minority groups were continually stereotyped as “savages” while white Americans continued to see the U.S. as a white nation.¹¹⁹ As a result, Black Americans were almost guaranteed to have conflict with some racist Americans who would not extend hospitality nor allow them to take up residency while trying to evacuate.¹²⁰

While no information suggested that suburban and rural citizens were forced to open their homes to evacuees, a survey was conducted in 1954 on the perceived duties of suburban and rural citizens during a nuclear attack. This survey broke down groups by distance. For instance, only 13% of those who lived under 50 miles away from the “urban target area” were willing to care for evacuees. This number increased to 17% for those living 50 miles to 149 miles away; 18% for those living 150 miles to 249 miles away; and 20% for those living 250 miles or further. Interestingly, 40% of those who lived under 50 miles away stated they had “nothing in mind” in

¹¹⁸ Quoted from David Monteyne, *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*, Kindle Edition.

¹¹⁹ The term “savagery” was given to racialized groups that resided in the cities. Historian Patrick Sharp notes that some white Americans wanted to evade the so-called “savagery of the cities” and move to an area that was predominately white. This will be elaborated on in chapter 3; Sharp, 219.

¹²⁰ Forming a post-nuclear attack community with both white and Black citizens would likely be difficult. The criminalization of Blackness, which began during slavery and worsened as time progressed, helped white Americans justify their discriminatory practices and prejudice thinking that was evident in the Cold War period; See, Khalil Gibran Muhammed, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 3-5.

terms of helping evacuees. This number slightly varied with the other groups (30%, 32%, and 26% respectively).¹²¹

In contrast, a survey was conducted in 1965 that specifically asked whether residents would be willing to house “some people who had children, or old people, or people of another race or religion, or very poor people, or fairly rich people.” This study did not indicate whether it specifically asked suburban residents or rural residents; however, 89.6% of those surveyed said they would not object to any person evacuating and residing in their home during an attack.¹²² When asked about whether those surveyed would house evacuees if only a warning of an attack was given, the number dropped to about 81% of people saying they would be willing to allow evacuees in.¹²³ Moreover, the last question asked, “how do you feel about the idea of planning or trying to move most of the people out of a city in order to try to save lives during an attack?” 52% of those surveyed said that they “favour[ed] it without reservations.”¹²⁴ Although this question did not specify what resident’s roles would be once evacuees were moved out of the city, it is probable that, since the survey previously asked residents what role they would play in housing evacuees, they would be expected to house these evacuees. Interestingly, however, in 1963, a survey conducted by the University of Chicago showed that 51% of respondents objected to the idea of having Black neighbours, and a majority agreed that whites had the right to prevent the movement of Black Americans in the housing market.¹²⁵ Owing to the fact that a large percentage of respondents in this particular survey were hesitant to reside beside Black people, it seems unlikely that white residents would be willing to house Black evacuees.

¹²¹ Withey, 134.

¹²² Dorothy V. Brodie, “Perceived Effectiveness of America’s Defenses,” *Office of Civil Defense, Office of the Secretary of the Army* (March 1965), 79, table 41.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹²⁵ Mildred A. Schwartz, “Trends in White Attitudes toward Negroes,” *National Opinion Research Center, the University of Chicago* (1967), 58-59.

Segregated Evacuation Sites

Segregation was prevalent throughout the 1950s; however, some steps towards desegregation were occurring, as evidenced by the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that required schools to desegregate. Unfortunately, many schools remained segregated for well over a decade after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.¹²⁶ In the wake of the *Brown* decision, desegregation became an even more polarizing issue, making it unlikely that civil defense measures would be easily desegregated. Jonathan Leib and Thomas E. Chapman's study, "Jim Crow, Civil Defense, and the Hydrogen Bomb: Race, Evacuation Planning, and the Geopolitics of Fear in 1950s Savannah, Georgia," used Savannah as a case study to show the extreme segregation present in evacuation sites in the South. Leib and Chapman found that Savannah's 1955 evacuation plan included forty-three receiving sites for schoolchildren in the event of an evacuation. Of these, thirty-nine received only Black or white students while only four receiving sites received both Black and white children. More specifically, thirty-one of these sites were designated for only white students, while the remaining eight were designated for only Black students.¹²⁷ Leib and Chapman further argue that segregation even extended to the railroad cars sent to pick up the students which separated white students from Black students as part of a strategy to help maintain Savannah's racial hierarchy.¹²⁸

Thus, although Savannah's civil defense evacuation plan did incorporate Black American students, civil defense authorities maintained pre-existing racial hierarchies throughout their civil defense planning. Leib and Chapman did not address the barriers that these schoolchildren

¹²⁶ Williams, 75.

¹²⁷ This number ranged from 82.3% to 86.4% of students who were sent to either an "all-white" or an "all-black" location; Leib & Chapman, 586.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

would face if they were evacuated into an area that was largely white. Although no official documents confirm treatment of the school children in these evacuation sites, Savannah's deep racial hierarchies in the 1950s suggest that Black American children would likely have been treated poorly by white residents relative to the white schoolchildren. Overall, Savannah, and likely the majority of the South, tended to preserve racial hierarchies while carrying out evacuation drills. During a legitimate nuclear threat, Savannah would likely continue to enforce racial segregation, which could contribute to the deaths of Black residents as their lives were seen by civil defense officials as not as important as maintaining racial hierarchy and white supremacy.

Conclusion

Although Eisenhower and the FCDA claimed that evacuations were the most reliable civil defense method for all Americans during his early presidency, there were very clear components that complicated the process. Ultimately, the FCDA set out to support one specific group of people: white, middle-class, suburbanites. This was the case despite the fact that the FCDA knew that those who were more vulnerable to attack, and therefore death, were those living in cities, particularly racialized groups, such as Black Americans. Civil defense should have targeted urban neighbourhoods more heavily than suburban neighborhoods, yet the FCDA had seemingly no interest in focusing their attention on those in the urban centres. Consequently, since urbanites, and specifically Black Americans, were particularly more vulnerable due to residing in a critical target area, as well as lacking funds, transportation, and information, this contributed to their lack of preparedness and inability to survive if a nuclear attack took place. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the FCDA never had any intention to provide civil defense support to Black Americans. Instead, the FCDA maintained the status quo,

thereby maintaining segregation and racial hierarchies in the U.S. If Black Americans happened to access civil defense information on their own without the help of the FCDA, this would be due to their own perseverance and intention.

CHAPTER TWO: SHELTERS

Background: Communism vs. Democracy and the Implementation of Shelters

By 1957, Eisenhower resorted to a mixture of both evacuations and individual shelters to help protect the American people. While claiming that evacuation was the best means of survival, Eisenhower realized that the enemy's arsenal had become more advanced which resulted in warning times being substantially decreased. The evacuation method cost significantly less as the government was only obligated to develop the Interstate Highway to secure protection for the American people.¹²⁹ Conversely, a federally-funded national shelter program would cost the Eisenhower Administration and Congress anywhere between \$7.5 billion to \$250 billion.¹³⁰ The cost of such a program constantly fluctuated depending on the research team that was assigned to provide an estimate to the Eisenhower Administration and Congress. For instance, in 1957, the Holifield Subcommittee proposed that a national shelter program would cost anywhere between \$20 to \$40 billion. Subsequently, the Gaither Report recommended that a shelter program must consist of protection from the blast as well as from fallout, costing an additional \$20 to \$30 billion.¹³¹ Another report on shelters, conducted by the RAND Corporation in 1958, concluded that funding a national shelter program would cost the government between \$20 million and \$150 billion depending on the size of the program.¹³² The cost depended on the scale of the program, where shelters would be located, the type of shelter that would be constructed, and the amount of supplies and equipment that would be stocked in the shelters. For instance, as historian Kenneth Rose noted, one of the issues with determining

¹²⁹ The initial cost of the Interstate Highway was \$27 billion. However, 90% of this would be federally-funded, while the remaining 10% would largely be financed through federal gasoline taxes and toll roads; David A. Pfeiffer, "Ike's Interstates at 50: Anniversary of the Highway System Recalls Eisenhower's Role as Catalyst," *National Archives* 38, no. 2 (2006).

¹³⁰ Rose, 31.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 30.

the exact cost of such a program came down to the definition of a “fallout shelter”. In 1955, the FCDA classified a fallout shelter as a structure with a protection factor (PF) of 5,000 or more. To create this protection factor, the concrete walls of the shelter had to be a certain thickness. The higher the protection factor, the more expensive the shelter would cost. The protection factor decreased over time; by 1960, the recommended protection factor dropped to 100. By the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the recommended protection levels of a shelter dropped to 40.¹³³ Thus, rather than spending money on an expensive federally-funded national shelter program, Eisenhower believed money was better spent towards developing weaponry to defend the U.S.¹³⁴ With the continuing advancement of the enemy’s weapons, Eisenhower believed he had to implement a policy that would be effective if residents were unable to evacuate from the city. As a result, he considered a self-help approach.

While the cost of a federally-funded national shelter program was the main deterrent of such a method, the Eisenhower Administration and some civil defense officials also argued that implementing a community shelter program essentially turned the U.S. into a garrison state. The possibility of a garrison state further exacerbated fears of civil defense planners and Eisenhower of a communist-style government devoted to military preparedness at the cost of individual and economic freedom.¹³⁵ By contrast, if American individuals funded their own shelters that would promote American-style militarization, endorse American capitalism and reinforce free markets, voluntary efforts, home ownership, individualism, and family autonomy.¹³⁶ Consequently, as the U.S. fought against communism, the Eisenhower Administration believed a federally-funded community shelter program would depict the U.S. as similar to their enemy. Owing to this and

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ McEnaney, 47.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 41, 52.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 41.

the cost of a federally-funded national shelter program, Eisenhower issued a National Shelter Policy in 1957 which codified the individual shelter as the foundation of preparedness. This policy created the illusion that the government was researching possible community shelter locations, largely to provide ‘stimulation’ for Americans to create their own shelters.

Throughout Eisenhower’s presidency, there would be no talk about a concrete community shelter program, as the focus was on self-help and maintaining American democratic ideals.¹³⁷

When Kennedy took office in 1961, he intensified the shelter policy, while disbanding Eisenhower’s evacuation plan. The shelter policy presented the issue of whether the government should implement a federally-funded community shelter program that would provide protection to all Americans—regardless of class, race, and socio-economic status—or implement an individual shelter program.¹³⁸ Kennedy advocated for community shelters, but instructed the newly renamed Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM), previously known as the FCDA, to continue to encourage Americans to build their own shelters. He went on to pressure Congress to provide federal funds for the community shelters.¹³⁹ The OCDM insisted that individual Americans build their own shelters without asking for any assistance from the government:

Your typical American attitude of accepting the responsibility for thinking about the protection of your family... and not asking for financial assistance from your government to do your job for you is most encouraging... this attitude makes our democratic way of life in the U.S. worth fighting for.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Ibid., 58-59; Tristan Miranda Williams, “Surviving Fallout in Appalachia: An Examination of Class Differences within Civil Defense Preparation in West Virginia During the Early Years of the Cold War,” PhD Dissertation, Marshall University (2017): 28.

¹³⁸ Monteyne, 331.

¹³⁹ The FCDA was renamed the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM) in 1958 by President Eisenhower. Subsequently, it was split into two different organizations during the early Kennedy years, the OCDM which was instructed to stockpile materials and coordinate plans for civil defense, and the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) which directed the fallout shelter program. The organization would be renamed to the Office of Emergency Planning later on in Kennedy’s presidency. For the purposes of this chapter, I will refer to the FCDA as the OCDM; Ibid., 37.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in McEnaney, 53.

Civil defense authorities took the onus off of the federal government and placed it on individual citizens by implying that the construction of their own shelter was the individual American's job; it was seen as upholding American democratic values. While promoting the idea of individual Americans constructing their own shelters, the OCDM and the federal government originally did not have concrete plans to create a community shelter program across the nation. These messages only applied to those who had the socio-economic means to construct a shelter in a home that allowed for one to be built. These issues became more prevalent when the Kennedy Administration decided to disband the evacuation policy outright and, as a result, Americans had to rely on constructing shelters for protection on their own. The individual shelter policy was specifically targeted at those with families who had the financial ability to build their own; therefore, the OCDM embarked on a campaign to help exclusively the white, middle-class, suburban home-owners, while neglecting Blacks and other poorer groups who did not own their own homes and were unable to afford to build a bomb shelter.¹⁴¹ Kennedy eventually implemented a community shelter program that claimed to be inclusive of all Americans, although it likely provided little opportunity for poorer or non-white groups to seek protection especially during a time of racial hierarchy and prevalent segregation. Despite knowing the delimiting factors that faced racialized minorities with both methods of civil defense, the OCDM and the Kennedy Administration did not adapt their information tactics or help remove barriers for poorer and Black Americans to access shelters.

¹⁴¹ It is important to note that throughout this chapter, I will be referring to bomb shelters and fallout shelters as one to steer away from any confusion; McEnaney, 52.

Income and Cost: The Attainability of a Private Shelter

Similar to evacuations, the individual shelter policy exposed racial hierarchy and segregation from its inception. Since civil defense authorities relied heavily on individuals to create their own shelters, those who were unable to afford to create one were left helpless in the event of an imminent attack. In 1960, the Department of Defense and the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) published an informational bulletin that outlined the cost of constructing a home shelter. There were three possible shelters that a person could construct: an underground single-family shelter which was estimated to cost between \$1,400 and \$1,500; a basement shelter which was estimated at \$250; and an aboveground shelter which was estimated at \$500.¹⁴² In the mid-20th century, this amount of money was significant, especially for poorer Americans. As a result, the individual shelter program excluded them, including most Black Americans, who were unable to afford such a costly expense, and specifically targeted the mostly white middle and upper-classes who had the financial means and the requisite property to build one.

The financial burden to construct a shelter was a greater percentage of their average wealth for Black Americans compared to their white counterparts. In 1960, Black Americans averaged an annual income of \$3,230, while their white counterparts averaged an income of \$5,835.¹⁴³ Similarly, only 19.2% of white American families earned under \$3,000 a year, while 46.5% of Black families made under \$3,000. As income levels increased, Black American representation decreased significantly compared to the white population.¹⁴⁴ Thus, it is evident that Black Americans were disproportionately represented among the lower income levels in the

¹⁴² Williams, 54.

¹⁴³ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, 44.

¹⁴⁴ For instance, in the middle income group of \$7,000 to \$9,999, Blacks made up 8.7% while white Americans made up 21.3%; additionally, Blacks made up 0.6% while whites made up 4.1% of the highest income group of \$15,000 and over; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Series G-1-415, *Percent Distribution of Families and Unrelated Individuals, by Race of Head, by Money Income Levels: 1947-1970*, 289-290.

U.S. It was more difficult for a Black family to purchase a shelter as constructing an underground shelter would cost the average Black American family almost half of their annual income. However, if a Black family were to construct a shelter, it was more feasible to construct one in their basement. Nonetheless, even if Black Americans had the financial means to purchase and construct a shelter, other barriers such as their living situations complicated their process of constructing some sort of protection.

Segregated Housing and the Inability of Black Americans to Move to the Suburbs

When the National Housing Agency (NHA) was created in 1942 it stated that it would not provide insurance to any public housing projects that promoted segregation. This included any housing projects built for Black Americans in areas exclusively for Black residents, and away from white neighbourhoods, as well as landlords and sellers who would not rent or sell to Black residents. However, the agency did not follow through with this, and segregation within the housing market remained as the agency continued to provide benefits to individuals who chose to discriminate based on race in their selection of purchasers or tenants.¹⁴⁵ Black Americans were largely forced into Black neighbourhoods, away from their white counterparts, and forced into homes that were not to the same standards as white housing. In Mobile Alabama, a NAS observer noted that the Black community was filled with “shacks or very poor houses in which the Negroes lived.”¹⁴⁶ This was prevalent across the U.S. during the mid-20th century, with other cities such as Detroit entrapping Black residents in the city’s worst buildings with insufficient conditions and overcrowding.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 66.

¹⁴⁶ NAS, “Report on ‘Operation Scat’, Participant Observer ‘B’”, 3.

¹⁴⁷ Sugrue, 33.

Most American cities during the mid-20th century had dual housing markets, one for Black residents and one for white residents. The Black areas were known as the “ghettos” due to their lower socio-economic status and increased impoverishment. In the 1940s, with the large influx of Black Americans moving northward, severe housing congestion was prominent in Northern cities as the housing market’s racial lines remained in place. Since most sellers and landlords would not sell or rent to Black people, many Black families were forced to double-up, and sometimes triple-up, in houses and apartments; single-family dwellings were subdivided into multi-family units as overcrowding of Black families increased. For instance, in Chicago’s South Side, Black families were forced to crowd into one-room areas.¹⁴⁸ This triggered the government to implement the National Housing Act of 1949, which promoted slum clearance, public housing, and urban redevelopment. However, even with the implementation of the National Housing Act, the dual housing market remained an essential component into the 1960s as rigid racial lines were enforced even with the process of slum clearance. This prompted a new urban development policy in the 1950s and 1960s that would essentially force working-class and middle-class Black families into a newer second ghetto.¹⁴⁹

Housing projects were created to combat overcrowding within Black neighbourhoods; however, they maintained segregation as homes were built specifically in Black areas, typically located in the city, away from white Americans and the suburbs. This placed Black residents directly in the target zone for a possible nuclear attack.¹⁵⁰ In the 1950s and 1960s, these massive high rise public housing projects were located within the North, Midwestern, and Western cities

¹⁴⁸ Raymond A. Mohl, “Race and Housing in the Postwar City: An Explosive History,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 94, no. 1 (2001), 12-13.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 12.

¹⁵⁰ As stated in chapter one, the critical target areas consisted of forty-two cities. Civil defense officials believed that if the enemy were to drop a bomb, cities would be the primary target.

like Chicago and St. Louis.¹⁵¹ Apartment-style high rise housing did not provide Black families with the ability to construct either an underground or aboveground shelter, causing Black families in these housing projects to be subject to annihilation if a nuclear attack were to occur.

Despite the enormous distribution of OCDM pamphlets such as “Family Fallout Shelter” which instructed Americans on how to build a shelter, those who lived in the city of Chicago were severely restricted in terms of building one. The pamphlet was distributed to approximately 3.5 million people within the county containing Chicago, yet due to building restrictions in the city of Chicago, the construction of fallout shelters was prohibited up until 1961. Astonishingly, these building restrictions did not spread to the suburbs around Chicago, allowing those in the suburbs to build a shelter while those in the inner city—the anticipated target area for a nuclear bomb—were prevented from doing so.¹⁵² While this impacted white Chicagoans as well as Blacks, it is evident that the OCDM was set on providing protection to the white, middle-class, suburbanites, leaving minority groups in the cities vulnerable to attack.

Some Black Americans were able to work their way out of the inner cities and purchase homes in the suburbs. However, most Black Americans faced racism upon their arrival in the suburbs, and sometimes prior to moving. These Black Americans were referred to as “pioneers,” as they were the first to cross the colour line by moving to the white suburbs. Many Black Americans were afraid to do so, claiming, “I don’t want to be a pioneer. I don’t want to have to lie awake thinking someone may throw a brick through my window or set fire to my house.”¹⁵³ Indeed, these threats loomed over many Black Americans who decided to move to the white suburbs in an attempt to escape the conditions of the urban slums.

¹⁵¹ Mohl, 13.

¹⁵² Davis, 636.

¹⁵³ Quoted in Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (University of Chicago Press, 2005), 271.

Black Americans heard stories of those like Harvey E. Clark who rented an apartment in an all-white neighborhood in a suburb of Chicago in 1951. Before Clark and his family moved in, 3,500 white people smashed and burned the apartment to communicate that Black families were not welcome in this community.¹⁵⁴ Wilbur Gary's family also faced discrimination when they bought a house in a suburb of Richmond, California, in 1952, resulting in an outburst by their white neighbors who lobbed bricks at the home and burned a cross on their lawn.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, in 1954, fourteen Black families purchased homes in the suburbs of Norfolk, Virginia. Before these people moved into their homes, white Americans in the neighbourhood launched a reign of terror by bombing and burning the newly purchased Black homes. This continued across the U.S. throughout the 1950s. White Americans used mob violence, arson, and bombings in Kansas City, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Tampa, and several other cities.¹⁵⁶ Many of these Black families were forced to eventually leave their new suburban homes, once again contributing to their inability to live in a home that provided an area for a shelter to be built. Leaving their suburban homes hindered their ability to construct a shelter because suburban homes offered more property to construct one, and many Black Americans living in the city resided in apartment buildings, therefore they were unable to construct a shelter.¹⁵⁷

The fear of racist domestic terrorism by white Americans caused many Blacks to avoid moving to the suburbs altogether. In a 1962 study in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1,500 Black Americans were surveyed on their desire to live in an all or mostly white neighbourhood and what they believed they would encounter if they moved to these places. Astonishingly, only 15% of the respondents were willing to move to a white neighborhood, while the majority of the

¹⁵⁴ Mohl, 18.

¹⁵⁵ Wiese, 273.

¹⁵⁶ Mohl, 20-21.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

respondents believed that living in a white area would be dangerous, and that they would face vandalism and ostracism while living there.¹⁵⁸ As civil defense focused primarily on the suburbs, Black Americans' attempts to live in the suburbs and possibly receive the same civil defense as white suburbanites were rendered useless as white suburban racist terror drove Black Americans back to the cities.

Private vs. Public Shelters: Black Attitudes toward Shelters

In the early to mid-1960s, three surveys were conducted to assess American residents' access to and favourable opinions of the shelter programs. The first survey was completed by the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in December of 1963 and examined Americans' knowledge of the shelter policy. The actual surveying took place in 1962, during a fearful period when Americans believed the Cold War could turn hot. Prior to this survey taking place, two notable Cold War events occurred that increased the purchasing of shelters by American civilians—the Berlin Crisis in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.¹⁵⁹ After these events, tensions between the Soviet Union and the U.S. lessened.¹⁶⁰ The survey provided a comparative breakdown between all classes of society and demonstrated that, despite the U.S. being on the brink of nuclear war, those of lower-socioeconomic means were less likely than the middle- and upper-class to believe in the utility of a shelter. Poorer residents were more likely to believe that the government should provide more information concerning civil defense measures, and were more likely to believe they were safe from a nuclear bomb.¹⁶¹ The survey clearly suggested that

¹⁵⁸ Weise., 271.

¹⁵⁹ McEnaney, 37, 79, 192.

¹⁶⁰ It is important to note that although this study was dated in December of 1963, the study's field work took place sometime in 1962, though the specific month is not indicated; Rose, 10.

¹⁶¹ As has previously been established, a larger percentage of Black Americans represented the lower and middle-class groups compared to their white counterparts; Ralph L. Garret, "Summary of Public Attitudes Toward and Information About Civil Defense," *Department of Defense, Office of Civil Defense* (December 1963), 18, 20.

civil defense information was being distributed to and received by the upper-classes as they were more inclined to construct a shelter. Yet, the working class and the working poor were not receiving pertinent information regarding the utility of a shelter and the protection a shelter provided. Since a large percentage of Black Americans fit into the less privileged class, a greater percentage of Black Americans were at a disadvantage compared to white Americans.¹⁶²

The second survey was conducted by Columbia University for the OCD in 1964 and 1965 and asked residents their opinions on whether they would prefer the implementation of a federally-funded community shelter program or if the responsibility should fall on the individual to construct a shelter.¹⁶³ This survey polled differences among nine communities, and revealed that support for public shelters correlated with socioeconomic status, class, and ethnic composition of the specific community surveyed. The survey found that 60% of people “generally favored shelters,” while 75% favoured them “if the federal or state government would underwrite the costs.”¹⁶⁴ Subsequently, it concluded that Jewish Americans, Italian Americans, and Black Americans were more in favour of a community shelter program.¹⁶⁵ Although this survey did not specify why these groups of people favoured the community shelter program, it is both plausible and likely that because these were minority racial or ethnic groups—which tended to make less money than whites—they sought federally-funded community shelters.

¹⁶² U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Series G-1-415, *Percent Distribution of Families and Unrelated Individuals, by Race of Head, by Money Income Levels: 1947-1970*.

¹⁶³ Although these surveys were conducted after the government and OCDM had already decided on individuals constructing their own shelter, and after the height of the nuclear age, it is important to note the views of Black Americans. Their opinions would have probably been very similar in 1958.

¹⁶⁴ This particular statistic did not differentiate between races, therefore, it is unknown whether the majority of those who favoured government assistance for a shelter program were people of colour or not; Gene N. Levine, “The American Public and the Fallout-Shelter Issue: A Nine-Community Survey,” *Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University* (May 1964).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Nonetheless, the two aforementioned surveys did not cause the OCDM to change its information distribution tactics. Notably, a survey conducted in 1965 by Louisiana State University found that Black residents were significantly more likely to depend upon their government for support during a nuclear attack. Further, Black residents felt less need to engage in individual preparation for a possible nuclear attack than their white counterparts.¹⁶⁶ Consequently, this survey displayed that Black residents were indeed less equipped than their white counterparts during some of the most critical years of the Cold War.¹⁶⁷ The OCDM clearly did not change its civil defense tactics to accommodate and assist racialized individuals, even after receiving the information from the first two surveys. It is plausible that if civil defense officials knew their tactics and information were not reaching the white population, they would likely have changed how they distributed this information to ensure the white population had the ability to utilize defense measures. In addition, the government and the OCDM stated they would mark and stockpile areas for community shelters; however, they maintained that individual residents should construct shelters in their homes for extra protection. Yet, Black residents were largely dependent on the government to provide them with civil defense support, more specifically, a community shelter. This caused Blacks to feel less obligated to engage in individual preparation, leaving them vulnerable to attack.

Homeownership: The Contributing Factor to Black Families' Inability to Construct a Shelter

Nevertheless, even if Black Americans could afford to construct a shelter, the OCDM seemingly ignored obvious flaws in the individual shelter program. One had to own a house to

¹⁶⁶ Joseph B. Perry, Jr., "Note on Confidence in Civil Defense," *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (1965), 143.

¹⁶⁷ These were the years just after the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis where the U.S. was on the brink of the Cold War, and shelter sales increased.

be able to construct a shelter, but many more white Americans than Black Americans owned their own homes, due to disparities in wealth, income, and real estate practices.¹⁶⁸ This was due in large part to racial covenants and red-lining that were used to bar anyone considered non-white from buying houses in certain locations, especially in the suburbs, as well as the construction of Black homes—mainly apartments—in areas that were already designated for Black residents.¹⁶⁹

Home ownership rates between Black residents and white residents differed significantly; in 1950, approximately 30% of Black Americans, and 55% of white Americans owned their own homes. By 1960, these figures rose to roughly 39% and 78% respectively.¹⁷⁰ Those who owned homes had an advantage as they would likely be able to construct some sort of shelter offering them protection. Considering that by 1960 only 39% of Black Americans were homeowners, this left 61% of Black Americans unable to construct a shelter for various financial or geographical reasons. Apartment-style buildings did not allow for one to construct a shelter, forcing most Black Americans to remain unprotected from a nuclear threat.¹⁷¹

Statistics were examined for five states in this thesis to determine how many homes in these regions were rented or owned by Black residents and white residents, and how many had basements.¹⁷² Admittedly, the U.S. Census statistics only provided two groups—white and non-

¹⁶⁸ William J. Collins and Robert A. Margo, “Race and Home Ownership: A Century-Long View,” *Explorations in Economic History* 38 (2001), 70.

¹⁶⁹ Christopher Bonastia, *Knocking on the Door: the Federal Government’s Attempt to Desegregate the Suburbs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 60-61.

¹⁷⁰ The graph that was used for this only shows homeownership rates for Black and white male household heads between the ages of 20 to 64 who were not in school. This graph only shows every tenth percentage; thus, these numbers may be slightly off. Originally, I had planned to use a more in-depth graph; however, this was the only document I could find during my research phase from home; Collins & Margo, 70.

¹⁷¹ Throughout my research, I was unable to find any information regarding whether these apartment buildings had basement shelters built in them. It is likely that many did not due to the cost of implementing one.

¹⁷² Although this is not a complete representation of the U.S., the states that were considered were Florida, California, Illinois, New York, and North Carolina. These five states will provide a good representation of homeownership in the U.S. at the time.

white—and did not provide an in-depth breakdown of each minority group. However, Black residents were the largest minority group in the U.S. at the time; consequently, these statistics show the limitations that Black Americans, and other minorities, endured across the U.S. as a result of their lack of home ownership.¹⁷³ Additionally, basement shelters were the most difficult shelter to construct—albeit the cheapest—as most houses in the U.S. at the time did not have basements. This limited Americans’ options to construct shelters due to lack of real estate and financial security. The inability to construct a shelter correlated with homeownership, once again, specifically disadvantaging Black Americans and other minorities.

In 1960, there were 1,325,805 white household heads, and 224,237 non-white household heads in Florida, and yet only 91,181 (40%) of these non-white household heads owned their own homes while 956,036 (72%) of white household heads were home owners.¹⁷⁴ This suggests that while there was a significantly smaller population of non-whites than whites in Florida, non-whites were at a considerable disadvantage in the home ownership category. Additionally, 60% of non-white household heads rented instead of owned their own home, while only 27.9% of white household heads rented.¹⁷⁵ Shelters would likely only be constructed in homes that were owned by the household head; thus, minority groups in Florida were at a considerable disadvantage compared to their white counterparts in terms of constructing a shelter. Basement shelters were even more scarce in Florida, with only 1.75% of homes having basements in

¹⁷³ In 1960, there were 18,871,831 Black citizens living in the U.S., consisting of 10.5% of the entire population. Whites made up 88.6% of the American population, and “other races” made up approximately 1% of the American population; U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals, By Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For The United States, Regions, Divisions, and States, “Race for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: 1960 (100-Percent Data), Table A-8.

¹⁷⁴ These statistics were found by taking the number of household heads by both white and non-white, and dividing it by either the number of home-owners or renters by race to give a representative percentage by race; Ibid., *Florida: Household Relationship, By Color, For the State, By Size of Place, 1960, and For the State, 1950 and 1940*, table 19.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

1960.¹⁷⁶ This data suggests that a significant amount of both white and non-white people in Florida were unable to construct a basement shelter; however, non-whites were still at a disadvantage compared to whites when it came to building aboveground or underground shelters owing to the lack of homeownership.

California was the only state examined that showed the closest homeownership rates among whites and non-whites, but the gap was still significant. In 1960, 59% of white household heads owned their own home, while 41.3% of non-white household heads owned theirs. Additionally, over 40% of white household heads rented their homes, while 58.4% of non-white household heads rented.¹⁷⁷ Consequently, although California shows a smaller gap between non-whites and whites in terms of renting and owning a home, there is still almost an 18% difference between the two groups signifying that non-whites were more disadvantaged in terms of building a shelter. Furthermore, only 18.3% of homes contained a basement thereby limiting non-white household owners' ability to construct the cheapest shelter.¹⁷⁸

The North did not provide much advantage to non-white people as seen in the state of New York. Interestingly, only 47.2% of white household heads owned their own homes, while 16.9% of non-whites owned their own homes. This meant that 52.7% of white household heads and 82.8% of non-white household heads rented.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, although non-whites were at a greater disadvantage than whites in terms of constructing a shelter, white people in New York were at a considerable disadvantage compared to white people in other states. Remarkably, New

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., *Florida: Structural Characteristics and Heating Equipment for the State, Inside and Outside SMSA's, Urban and Rural: 1960*, table 4.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., *California: Household Relationship, By Color, For the State, By Size of Place, 1960, and for the State, 1950 and 1940*, table 19.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., *California: Structural Characteristics and Heating Equipment for the State, Inside and Outside SMSA's, Urban and Rural: 1960*, table 4.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., *New York: Household Relationship, By Color, For the State, By Size of Place, 1960, and for the State, 1950 and 1940*, table 19.

York had the largest percentage of basements in homes with 90.7% of all homes having one.¹⁸⁰ Since the majority of non-white people rented, a basement shelter was likely out of the question.¹⁸¹ New York offered little hope for non-whites in terms of constructing a shelter to protect themselves.

Comparatively, Illinois had a much smaller gap between white and non-white household owners and renters than in New York, but larger than in the other states examined. Over 60% of white household heads in Illinois owned their own home, while only 22.4% of non-white household heads had homeownership. As a result, a significant number of non-whites rented compared to their white counterparts, hindering their ability to construct a shelter on their property, with 77.4% of non-whites, and 22.4% of white household heads renting.¹⁸² Basement information for Illinois was not found; nevertheless, even if a large percentage of homes had a basement, Illinois offered minimal protection for non-whites in terms of constructing any form of shelter.

Similar to Florida and New York, North Carolina had a larger percentage of white homeownership, and a larger percentage of non-whites renting their homes, which significantly reduced the ability for non-whites to construct a shelter. Over 65% of white household heads and 38.2% of non-white household heads owned their own homes. This indicated that 61.8% of non-white household heads and 34.1% of white household heads rented their homes.¹⁸³ Only

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., *New York: Structural Characteristics and Heating Equipment for the State, Inside and Outside SMSA's, Urban and Rural: 1960*, table 4.

¹⁸¹ To construct a shelter on a rented property, the renter would have to ask permission from the landlord. Additionally, it would cost a lot of money to construct a shelter, and it is plausible that the majority of those renting did not have the financial means to construct such a costly expense.

¹⁸² Ibid., *Illinois: Household Relationship, By Color, For the State, By Size of Place, 1960, and for the State, 1950 and 1940*, table 19.

¹⁸³ Ibid., *North Carolina: Household Relationship, By Color, For the State, By Size of Place, 1960, and for the State, 1950 and 1940*, table 19.

20.8% of North Carolina homes contained basements; however, since non-white homeownership was so low, it is likely that most did not have the ability to construct a basement shelter.¹⁸⁴

Although these states do not represent the entire U.S., it is evident that non-whites were at a disadvantage in terms of homeownership and, thus, constructing a shelter for protection. These five states represent distinct areas of the U.S., therefore, it is plausible and likely that non-whites were more likely to rent than whites across the country. Despite the federal government knowing that non-whites were restricted in building protection, the government and civil defense officials still expected Americans to construct their own shelters. As a result, both the OCDM and federal government were set on protecting white Americans, and did not consider or acknowledge the delimiting factors that resulted in non-whites' vulnerability to an attack.

Belief in Shelters

In the aforementioned 1963 OCD survey, it showed the distinction in the utility of constructing a shelter between those who owned their own homes and those who rented. Those who owned their own homes were more inclined to construct a shelter, and the majority had plans to construct a shelter if one was not already built.¹⁸⁵ The survey indicated that those who rented were more inclined to question the likelihood of being struck by a bomb, and consequently, less likely to prepare for such an attack. The upper-class was more likely to believe the government should do less in terms of civil defense, while the lower-class believed the government should provide more information and support.¹⁸⁶ Respondents with lower educational levels had an unfavourable attitude toward civil defense, were the least informed about shelters and, as a result, the least likely to believe that constructing a shelter would protect

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., *North Carolina: Structural Characteristics and Heating Equipment for the State, Inside and Outside SMSA's, Urban and Rural: 1960*, table 4.

¹⁸⁵ Garret, 21.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 18.

them. These respondents were also optimistic about their chance of survival believing that their part of the country would not be subject to an attack.¹⁸⁷

This survey suggested that since the majority of Black Americans did not own their own homes, had lower educational levels than whites, and were typically in the middle or lower-classes, they were more likely to be uninformed about a nuclear attack and the protection that shelters provided. This contributed to Black Americans' trust that they would be safe from a nuclear threat, and led to their lack of preparation. Evidently, OCDM information regarding the protection that shelters provided was ineffective in reaching Black Americans, amplifying their inability to protect themselves. However, this was one of many barriers that Black Americans would face when trying to protect themselves.

Cost of Resources to Keep People Alive in Shelters

After constructing a shelter, Americans had to ensure it was stocked with adequate resources for survival in order to withstand the necessary duration in isolation. The OCDM recommended a two-week period during which Americans would remain in their shelters after a nuclear threat to wait out the potential fallout, fire, and any life-threatening debris.¹⁸⁸ With the growing power of the enemy's nuclear weapons, shelters had to protect from multiple aspects of the bomb. Shelters had to be blast proof, heat proof, and sealable, meaning oxygen supplies had to be stored and ready for use in the shelter to survive the nuclear blast.¹⁸⁹ Oxygen had to be supplied for each inhabitant, costing an astonishing amount of \$300 to \$400 per person per day.¹⁹⁰ Thus, for the two-week duration recommended by the OCDM, this would cost anywhere

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 20.

¹⁸⁸ McEnaney, 158.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 175.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 175.

between \$4,200 to \$5,600 per person for the entire two week period.¹⁹¹ This amount of money would be very difficult—if not impossible—even for the average white American family to afford, and even more difficult for the average Black American family to afford based on their average annual income. The OCDM and federal government did not provide Americans with oxygen for their underground shelters, inevitably resulting in a largely unequipped population. Only those who were wealthy—mainly white families—could equip their shelters with oxygen tanks.¹⁹² Although this affected white American families, a larger percentage of racialized minority groups were affected by this as more of them were in the lower income levels.

Community Shelters and Sharing Shelters with Black Americans

Community shelters were considered by the American government, beginning with President Truman, in 1950, after the creation of the FCDA. The Truman Administration never solidified a civil defense program; however, the Administration attempted to by appointing Millard Caldwell Jr.—a segregationist—as the head of the FCDA in January of 1951.¹⁹³ Caldwell’s civil defense policy maintained racial hierarchy during a time when Black residents were forced to use separate facilities from whites in most public spaces in the US. His civil defense policy was devoted to a separate-but-equal shelter plan whereby Black Americans were separated from their white counterparts. His proposal of the “Caldwell Shelter Program” was designed to allow each state and locality to control how shelters were operated, knowing that in the American south, community shelters could, and likely were, developed within a Jim Crow

¹⁹¹ I calculated this on my own by multiplying the cost from McEnaney’s *Civil Defense Begins at Home* by a two-week period.

¹⁹² It would be more likely that wealthier people could afford this, and very clearly, white Americans made up a larger percentage of the higher income groups: in the income levels of \$10,000 and more, whites made up 15.3% of this income level, while non-whites made up 4.9% of these income levels; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Series G-1-415, Percent Distribution of Families and Unrelated Individuals, by Race of Head, by Money Income Levels: 1947-1970*.

¹⁹³ Farish, 196; McEnaney, 15.

framework.¹⁹⁴ The Caldwell Shelter Program failed financially; however, it is clear that from the inception of the Cold War era, civil defense authorities were—inadvertently or not—allowing southern states to implement segregated community shelters thereby maintaining the racial hierarchy prevalent in the U.S. at the time.¹⁹⁵ Community shelters as a civil defense measure would generally be halted throughout Eisenhower’s presidency, but would resume once Kennedy took office in 1961.

In September of 1961, a letter to American residents from President Kennedy was published in *Life* magazine, in which he assured Americans that the OCDM would create community shelters. However, Kennedy still promoted the necessity of individual shelters for protection as buildings were still being identified for the construction of community shelters.¹⁹⁶ By the mid-1960s, the OCDM had surveyed, marked, and stocked community shelters across the U.S. and had assigned certain parts of the population to specific shelters.¹⁹⁷ Whether race helped determine where specific people were assigned is unknown. However, due to previous trends of civil defense authorities maintaining racial hierarchy and segregation—as seen in the early 1950s with the Caldwell Shelter Program—as well as prominent racial segregation in other aspects of American culture such as housing, it is plausible and likely that community shelters were segregated. If community shelters were based on where one lived, it would have been easier for civil defense authorities to maintain segregation within community shelters.

¹⁹⁴ Andrew D. Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red: Civil Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 94. For more information on Millard Caldwell Jr. and the FCDA, see, Andrew D. Grossman, “Segregationist Liberalism: The NAACP and Resistance to Civil-Defense Planning in the Early Cold War, 1951-1953,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 13 no. 3 (2000), 477-497.

¹⁹⁵ Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red*, 95.

¹⁹⁶ Lisa Jean Daly, “Defending a Way of Life: Civil Defense in the United States, 1940-1963,” PhD Dissertation, Syracuse University (2005), 235; Monteyne, 552.

¹⁹⁷ Monteyne, 1045.

While community shelters were favoured by minority race and ethnic groups, they had many limitations for the Black community. Civil defense authorities claimed that information including the location of community shelters would be published in newspapers. The Black newspapers that were examined for this thesis did not contain any information whatsoever on community shelters. There were many areas across the U.S. that were labelled “deficit areas” where no community shelters were constructed. Subsequently, the responsibility fell on residents to know where these deficit areas were, and, more importantly, where they could find shelter.¹⁹⁸ Additionally, the OCDM expected shelters to be within a fifteen-minute drive from residents as the success or failure of survival was dependent on the assumption that residents had easy access to a community shelter.¹⁹⁹ This posed yet another barrier for Black Americans because if shelters were not within walking distance, one had to obtain transportation. As was previously established, obtaining a vehicle was much more difficult for Black Americans than it was for white Americans due to the difference in annual income. Subsequently, Black Americans who relied on community shelters due to lack of financial means had the added stress of getting access to a vehicle to make it to safety during a nuclear attack.

The lack of access to safety measures for Black Americans was exacerbated by the financial deficits that 250 years of slavery and 100 years of Jim Crow had created. In one particular case in Denver, Colorado, civil defense officials were planning to construct a community fallout shelter to be built under city streets. The shelter would accommodate up to twenty families of five persons each with a fifty person overload. This community shelter would be financed by community members buying shares at a cost of \$1,200 to \$1,500.²⁰⁰ It is

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 1137.

¹⁹⁹ Williams, 54.

²⁰⁰ Rose, 102.

unknown whether this plan was executed or if there were other cities that had the same idea. However, those who could not afford to buy shares for protection would be unable to seek this benefit during a threat, further causing a disadvantage in obtaining protection.

Nonetheless, Black Americans who could successfully get to a community shelter encountered other potential barriers once they arrived. Community shelters relied on all members getting along; however, with the racial tensions in the U.S., especially during the 1960s, it is plausible that issues regarding different races and classes would arise.²⁰¹ It was concluded in the 1964 Columbia University survey that community shelters, if built, “were more likely to be preferred by persons whose class positions were congruent with the class character of their communities.”²⁰² Racialized groups, and those of lower socioeconomic status, seeking shelter with white Americans could, and likely would, create tensions during the two-week duration of remaining in a shelter.²⁰³ If these problems were enough to drive Black Americans and other minorities out of community shelters, they might resort to seeking shelter through neighbours; however, within the racist climate at the time, this posed potential problems as well.

There were numerous reports of threats across the U.S. to have neighbours shot if they attempted to enter the homeowners’ shelters. For instance, Charles Davis of Austin, Texas, stated in *Time* magazine in 1961 that he was prepared to defend his shelter, having stocked four rifles and a .357 magnum handgun in it to scare away any possible threat. He was worried that his neighbours might infiltrate his shelter when he was not there and stated, “I’ve got a .38 tear-gas gun and if I fire six or seven tear gas bullets into the shelter, they’ll either come out or the gas will get them.”²⁰⁴ Comparatively, this also appeared to be the political climate in the north at

²⁰¹ Williams, 54.

²⁰² Levine, 16.

²⁰³ McEnaney, 151.

²⁰⁴ Rose, 94

the time. In Hartford, Connecticut, a man warned his neighbors that he only had enough vital supplies for his immediate family. He threatened to shoot anyone who tried to enter his shelter regardless of whether they were friends or not.²⁰⁵ The fear of others infiltrating shelters was not only visible at a civilian level. In fact, in Denver, Colorado, the civil defense director for Jefferson County had equipped his own shelter with weapons to keep any unwanted people out.²⁰⁶ This information was published in the *Denver Post*, clearly showing that although he was a representative of the OCDM, he did not fear the consequences of being quoted in the newspaper on this topic. While none of these accounts specify race in any way, it is conceivable that due to the racist climate in the U.S. during the mid-20th century, race would only further exacerbate mistrust and violence.

Conclusion

In 1957 and onward, the OCDM claimed that individual shelters were the most effective civil defense policy for all Americans, thereby implementing the most expensive civil defense tool for individual residents. Similar to the evacuation policy, there were components that complicated the attainability of shelters for poorer and marginalized groups, such as Black Americans. While the OCDM had surveyed the American population and received a multitude of feedback indicating that many such people were unable to access shelters, they did nothing to combat these issues. The OCDM continued to focus their resources on helping the white, middle-class, suburbanites and the upper-class by implementing an individual shelter policy. Individual shelters were very costly, restricting many people—especially racialized minority groups and those of lower socioeconomic status—from constructing one. Despite the later

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 103.

attempts to construct a community shelter program across the nation, the prevalent racial hierarchy and segregation within American culture considerably limited Black Americans from being able to successfully access a shelter. Evidently, the OCDM had not learned from their evacuation plan, and thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the OCDM never had any intentions to provide civil defense support to Black Americans. Rather, the OCDM maintained racial hierarchy and segregation throughout their shelter policy which is unsurprising given the racist atmosphere of American society at the time.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE

Background: Media Distribution Among the American Public

While planners called for the protection of *all* Americans, in reality, the literature that was provided specifically targeted the idealized white, suburban, middle-class, nuclear family.²⁰⁷ Otherwise stated, planners consistently failed to either acknowledge or diminish pervasive barriers specific to racialized groups that restricted both the accessibility and the utility of civil defense literature. For instance, this literature often provided information specific to those who could afford their own homes, vehicles, and shelters, along with the financial means to buy vital supplies needed to survive. As one example, the pamphlet *Four Wheels to Survival* (1955) provided citizens with information about how to stock their vehicles with supplies before evacuation.²⁰⁸ However, as previously discussed in chapter one, vehicles were much more accessible to whites than non-whites due to financial disparities. Thus, all pamphlets targeting car owners thereby excluded poorer racialized populations as they were less likely to own cars. Additionally, the homes depicted in civil defense literature were typically images of suburban homes. These photos reinforce that the intended target of the literature was suburbanites who were predominately white. Since civil defense literature did not depict or describe how citizens living in apartment buildings or substandard housing could protect themselves, the literature excluded a large portion of other racial groups. Likewise, Black Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities were rarely pictured in the distributed material. This was especially true in films and pamphlets where, if Black citizens were shown at all, they were always depicted in a subordinate position or deliberately separated from whites, thereby reinforcing pre-existing racial hierarchy and segregation. Although planners claimed that civil defense was inclusive of all,

²⁰⁷ Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red*, 92.

²⁰⁸ Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Four Wheels to Survival Pamphlet*, Ohio State Archives Series 151, Civil Defense Circulars and Directives, 1955-1961.

their literature painted a different picture—one that was inclusive only of the white, middle-class, suburban, nuclear family.

Civil defense literature’s focus on the idealized white, middle-class, suburban, nuclear family stemmed from then-current American values. Owing to the pre-existing racist climate, American society continued to demonize minorities to maintain racial hierarchies. As historian Patrick Sharp illustrated, white Americans were seen by civil defense authorities as the embodiment of true American virtues who, in the post-nuclear attack period, were searching for a way to evade the “savagery” of the racially mixed city.²⁰⁹ In the post-WWII period, much of American society viewed urban centers in the U.S. as dangerous places where violence and crime occurred; therefore, whites who could afford to do so frequently escaped these areas by seeking refuge in the suburbs, aided by the GI Bill and a mortgage industry designed to help them.²¹⁰ Cities were popularly characterized as “jungles” filled with dangerous “savages;” thus, the whites who continued living in the city were characterized as brave for living with the “threatening mix of foreign cultures and non-white races that festered” in them.²¹¹ These stereotypes about cities exacerbated the white population’s fears, leading to an increasing influx of white Americans moving to the suburbs. This further contributed to the widespread suburban cultural, economic, and racial homogeneity in the postwar period.²¹² Crucially, civil defense literature maintained pre-existing racial hierarchies by promoting civil defense measures and necessities most available to white, middle-class suburbanites; by excluding cities, the literature ultimately excluded racialized minority groups.

²⁰⁹ The term “savage” was used to describe minorities in American society. In Sharp’s *Savage Perils*, he noted that popular literature of the time often depicted minority groups as a “savages,” and city centres as “savagery areas,” due in large part to a large percentage of minority groups residing there; see, Sharp, 171-176.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 171-172, 175.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 176.

²¹² *Ibid.*

The migration of citizens to the suburbs caused an explosion of mass-produced single-family homes marketed to white, middle-class residents after the war.²¹³ Generally, Black citizens and other minorities were unable to obtain property in the suburbs due to racial restrictions whereby sellers and landlords were unwilling to disrupt exclusively white neighborhoods. Real estate agents and brokers used two strategies to prevent Black migration to the suburbs: blockbusting and racial steering. Blockbusting was a tactic used by real estate agents where agents would create fear amongst white suburban homeowners who were selling their homes by creating false stories about racial and ethnic minorities. This would cause homeowners to sell their homes at a low price where agents could buy and resell them at higher prices, thus ensuring that minorities could not purchase one of these homes. Similarly, racial steering was a tactic used to persuade prospective homebuyers to purchase homes in specific areas based on one's race.²¹⁴ It was much easier for planners to target white Americans since white Americans were largely self-segregating themselves from Black citizens and other racialized minorities. These strategies maintained and reinforced pre-existing racial structures.

Civil defense planners believed that by exposing enough information regarding the nuclear bomb and defense measures, “the family itself will act...and enter into the Civil Defense mechanism.”²¹⁵ Americans would be able to obtain this information—through newspapers, magazines, films, pamphlets, and various other media outlets—from a wide variety of places such as grocery stores and post offices where it was displayed for general public access.²¹⁶ Although civil defense planners used a wide variety of media outlets, they did not consider that Black Americans and other minority groups tend to receive their information from different

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ewen, 176, 183.

²¹⁵ Quoted in McEnaney, 75.

²¹⁶ McEnaney, 75.

sources than white Americans. The University of Michigan conducted a study in 1954 that categorized media outlets based on geographic location by distinguishing metropolitan areas from suburban areas. While the study does not indicate race in any way, as stated in chapter two, significantly larger percentages of Black Americans (approximately 77%) resided in urban areas in the 1950s, compared with fewer white Americans (approximately 56%).²¹⁷ These numbers further shifted in 1960, with approximately 79% of Black Americans living in urban areas and only 47% of whites residing there.²¹⁸ The University of Michigan survey showed that suburban areas received the most civil defense information compared to any other geographic location in the U.S. This is owing to the fact that suburban populations tend to receive their information sources that civil defense planners published the majority of their information in: newspapers (42%), television (32%), and pamphlets (26%). Comparatively, metropolitan areas received significantly less information from newspapers (27%), television (27%), and pamphlets (11%).²¹⁹ Admittedly, newspapers, television, and pamphlets were some of the most utilized media outlets by both groups.²²⁰ This chapter will examine these three sources to demonstrate the underlying racial exclusion present in civil defense literature.²²¹

²¹⁷ This particular document only provides two categories: “central cities” and “outside central cities.” The second category is quite vague. I assume that within the “outside central cities” category included smaller cities, suburban, and rural areas; *United States: Population Inside and Outside Central City or Cities of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, By Race: 1900 to 1960*, table 1.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ Withey, 92.

²²⁰ The most utilized media outlets in suburbia were newspapers (42%), television (32%), radio (15%), magazines (11%), and pamphlets (26%). Comparatively, the most utilized media outlets in metropolitan areas were newspapers (27%), television (27%), radio (16%), magazines (11%), and pamphlets (11%). The other forms of media were significantly lower for both groups. This chapter will focus on films, pamphlets, and newspapers, which may not have been the most utilized sources for information among both groups; however, I chose these three media outlets because they had the most accessible information online.

²²¹ I was unable to locate pamphlets and films from state civil defense programs as not all were digitized, thus, this chapter will examine pamphlets and films created by the federal civil defense program.

Civil Defense Literature: The Underlying Target Audience

Despite the fact that civil defense literature instructed all members of society to protect themselves from an attack, the literature overwhelmingly depicted suburban homes and communities. In sum, the information produced by civil defense authorities presupposed that all Americans either owned or had access to a specific type of house where they could construct a shelter of some sort; however, as established above, shelters were not feasible solutions for those living in city apartments or densely populated urban neighborhoods.²²² Notably, civil defense literature seemingly targeted suburban areas because planners believed that the enemy would aim for large industrial cities in an attack.²²³ For this reason, planners inactions of ensuring that racialized groups had access to civil defense makes it appear that they did not believe civil defense was useful for city dwellers as they were located in the critical target areas. Yet, civil defense planners continually promoted their information stating that “all Americans” should utilize civil defense. While racialized minorities were not receiving much civil defense information, the information they did receive was largely useless owing to financial, geographical, and social reasons.

Civil defense planners created films describing protection against nuclear threat which similarly focused on suburbanites. This further exposed planners’ assumption that industrial urban areas would be destroyed by a nuclear bomb, but those living in suburban areas outside the city might survive and take shelter in the aftermath. In 1950, the FCDA released one of their first films depicting how Americans could protect themselves from a nuclear threat. *How to Protect Your Family and Home in a Nuclear Attack* began by stating that all Americans—

²²² Grossman, *Neither Dead Nor Red*, 85.

²²³ As stated in chapter one, the critical target areas consisted of forty-two cities as civil defense officials believed that cities would be the primary target; Williams, 21.

whether living in a house, apartment, or even if they were driving during the attack—needed to take cover.²²⁴ Although the film mentioned that those living in apartments needed to take precautions, it offered no explanation on how apartment-dwellers could successfully protect themselves. This resulted in the exclusion of a large percentage of Black Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities. Further, this film assumed that the majority of people owned their own home by depicting a three-story home with a basement. This further reinforced a middle-class narrative in which the only way to survive was to live in a large home with many stories and a basement.²²⁵ Additionally, the video showed the basement as a safe area; it provided information on how to build the most effective and least expensive shelter—a basement shelter—along with the necessary materials to stockpile.²²⁶ As established in chapter two, not only were basements relatively uncommon, but since white Americans had higher homeownership rates than non-whites, this information hardly applied to minority groups. It is evident that this specific informational film was directed at white Americans who could afford the resources to keep themselves alive during a nuclear attack, which was the recurrent theme throughout all civil defense materials.

In a subsequent 1951 film, *Survival Under Atomic Attack*, the FCDA suggested that citizens who followed proper procedures of civil defense would have a much larger chance of survival. Therefore, civil defense authorities reinforced the “self-help” method: authorities reminded citizens that their survival depended on whether citizens helped themselves by following civil defense measures properly. This meant that citizens who did not construct,

²²⁴ The Best Film Archives. *How to Protect Your Family and Home in a Nuclear Attack, 1950s Educational Film*. 1950. YouTube Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgWDu1N9kLE>, 1:31-1:47.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:49-3:55.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:24-3:55.

practice, or otherwise understand civil defense measures were the least likely to survive.²²⁷

Survival Under Atomic Attack reiterated that civil defense planners had no intention of helping citizens protect themselves; rather, they removed the onus from themselves, and placed it back on the residents. Ultimately, civil defense planners ignored the financial and geographic barriers that poorer and many non-white Americas faced in a time of crisis by prioritizing information delivery for white, middle-class, suburban residents.

Notably, *Survival Under Atomic Attack* also showed the destruction in Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the atomic bomb. The film states that, “if the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had known what we know about civil defense, thousands of lives would have been saved.”²²⁸ The film then reverts to a clip of an American suburb.²²⁹ This editing again reveals that planners were specifically targeting a white, middle-class, suburban, nuclear family living in a well-kept home with a tidy yard. These particular homes had basements, were well-maintained, and owned by families who were financially secure.²³⁰ These well-maintained homes were depicted as safe; supposedly, they would not erupt into flames after an attack. However, by creating an image that suggested only a specific type of home would survive a bomb’s blast, heat, and radiation, planners excluded citizens living in apartment-style housing. While the film briefly mentioned that those living in apartments should take cover in a hallway, the information was minimal compared to what was provided for those living in houses. Likewise, in this particular scene, the film only showed white, middle-class people, again excluding Black Americans and other groups.

²²⁷ Oakes, 69.

²²⁸ Periscope Film. *Survival Under Atomic Attack 1951 Nuclear Bomb Shelter Film*. 2014. YouTube Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UW0LgiHFQQ>, 8:25-8:46.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., 2:38-3:53; 7:16-7:36.

Civil defense planners' tactics did not change throughout the 1950s. Despite the supposed advancements in racial equality throughout the decade marked by the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and a change in presidential administrations, civil defense planners refused to change their target audience to include Black citizens. Interestingly, President Eisenhower initially did not support the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and refused to use his authority to enforce it, and that lack of leadership on desegregation surely signaled to the FCDA that it did not need to address the racism in its civil defense literature campaign at the time.²³¹

Notably, in 1954, Eisenhower's FCDA created a twelve-minute film titled *The House in the Middle* with the help of the National Paint, Varnish, and Lacquer Association. This particular film showed different houses throughout, each maintained to a different standard. The FCDA insisted that a well-kept home—freshly painted, with new and sturdy wood, and no garbage in or outside of the property—would withstand a nuclear bomb's initial blast, heat, and fire. The purpose of this video was to compare how a well-kept home would fare against a run-down home during a nuclear blast. FCDA planners asserted that keeping one's home clean and maintained meant that those inside the structure would have a better chance of survival if a nuclear attack occurred.²³² Thus, the film clearly and absurdly implied that those living in sub-standard housing, mainly poor, racialized minorities, were destined for annihilation compared with well-maintained middle-class homes that supposedly had a better chance of withstanding an attack.²³³

²³¹ It is important to note that Eisenhower changed his mind on segregated schools and in 1957 he intervened in Little Rock Central High School's attempt to refuse entry of nine Black students; Sharp, 213.

²³² National Paint, Varnish, and Lacquer Association. *The House in the Middle. Second Version*. 1954. Video. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mbrs02034317/>.

²³³ Monteyne, 472.

In addition, *The House in the Middle* concluded by setting off a nuclear bomb near three homes: one was maintained, while the other two had rotting wood, unkempt painting jobs, and garbage surrounding the property. When the test footage unfolded, the viewer saw the untidy homes erupt in flames while the tidy home appeared fine for the brief moment that it was on camera. However, the film quickly cut away; the next time the homes were shown, even the tidy home was smouldering. Since smouldering is clear evidence of fire, the film suggested that well-maintained homes would be spared from destruction, while poorly maintained homes were subject to heavy damage. FCDA planners deliberately ensured that the tidy home was not shown engulfed in flames.²³⁴ Although it is likely true that an unkempt home would be an increased fire hazard, this difference is unlikely to be as dramatic as the film portrayed in the case of a nuclear blast. By establishing a significant difference between suburban and run-down homes, the FCDA planners again excluded lower-income residents, and implied that they had little hope of survival.

The same film also argued that a fresh coat of white paint would be beneficial in protecting citizens from a nuclear blast. Not only did FCDA officials believe that white paint provided a sense of cleanliness, organization, and competence, but they also argued that white paint could reflect an atomic heat wave. Thus, civil defense officials encouraged the population to ensure that their homes were freshly painted with white paint.²³⁵ Clearly this was an absurd assumption as a fresh coat of white paint would do nothing to stop the blast or protect those inside the home from a nuclear bomb. Although it is unclear whether the FCDA intended to make a connection between white paint and the preservation of racial hierarchy and segregation in U.S. society, the association between the colour white and cleanliness is deeply symbolic.

²³⁴ Ibid., 3:25-6:01.

²³⁵ Monteyne, 472.

Given the racist climate in the U.S., it is entirely possible that this association was deliberate. Further, it is apparent that the National Paint, Varnish, and Lacquer Association collaborated with the FCDA on this film to help promote their business. By promoting white paint as a life-saving tool, the National Paint, Varnish, and Lacquer Association would have likely profited off of this film.

When shelters were reintroduced during the Eisenhower Administration, after evacuation was mostly abandoned as a survival tactic, civil defense planners directed the public to construct their own shelters. One film in particular, *New Family in Town* (1956) showed Americans how to build their own home shelters. The film depicted a suburban area with a newly immigrated British family that decided to construct an underground shelter. All of the people depicted in the film were white, middle-class suburbanites with financial means.²³⁶ By including foreigners—British immigrants—this film arguably provided the illusion that civil defense and suburban areas were diverse and inclusive. However, since the British foreigners conformed to the image of the ideal nuclear, white, middle-class American family, this supposedly inclusive image of civil defense provided the illusion that civil defense officials were promoting civil defense measures to Americans and foreigners. Since the British immigrants conformed to the image of the ideal nuclear, white, middle-class American family, planners were able to embellish this theoretically inclusive image of civil defense. Meanwhile, civil defense continued to ignore racialized groups that did not conform to the ideal American family. Clearly, planners were only inclusive of people that looked similar to white Americans. Similar exclusion recurred in civil defense pamphlets. These pamphlets provided diverse information on how people could protect themselves during a nuclear attack—in a shelter, in a vehicle, or out in the open. Yet, like civil

²³⁶ Periscope Film. *New Family in Town*. 2015. YouTube Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZbraaqBwtc>.

defense films, it is evident throughout the pamphlets that planners never considered—or at least addressed—social, financial, or geographic barriers that prevented city residents, particularly Black Americans, from using the provided information.

In the mid-1950s, the FCDA created a pamphlet known as *Grandma's Pantry Was Ready* (1955).²³⁷ This particular pamphlet provided suburban homeowners with the comforting image of a well-stocked fallout shelter.²³⁸ The front page of the pamphlet displayed a drawing of a fully stocked kitchen with a large wood-burning stove that was well-prepared for a nuclear attack.²³⁹ As historian Patrick Sharp pointed out, *Grandma's Pantry* reinforced rigid 1950s gender roles by depicting women as housewives, wearing high heeled shoes, remaining calm, and expected to provide their children with games in their bomb shelter to create an enjoyable experience. Ultimately, women were expected to “make a game out of it: playing civil defense” rather than being scared of what was about to occur.²⁴⁰ They were expected to ensure that the kitchen was stockpiled with food, water, and supplies for the two-week period the family spent in shelter during and post- nuclear attack. While depicting a white suburban family in a shelter, *Grandma's Pantry* clearly targeted a middle-class and upper-class population by showing certain meals and supplies to purchase that may have been inaccessible for lower-income families. This was corroborated by a 1962 survey of over 11,000 American homemakers which found that two-thirds of homes could only afford to stockpile enough food to survive for a week or less. Only one-third of households could stockpile enough food to last about nineteen days, up from only 16% from 1956.²⁴¹ This was troublesome as the 1962 survey was conducted after some of the

²³⁷ I was unable to locate the actual *Grandma's Pantry* and thus relied on the examination of this pamphlet from Patrick Sharp's *Savage Perils*. Unfortunately, Sharp's book did not fully examine or provide the pictures within the pamphlet, and therefore it is unknown if there was a grandma depicted and whether she was white.

²³⁸ Sharp, 206-207.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 204.

²⁴⁰ Garrison, 37.

²⁴¹ Davis, 853, 862.

most critical events of the Cold War—namely, the Berlin Crisis and Cuban Missile Crisis—where America was on the brink of a nuclear war. Furthermore, this survey displayed that, “farm households were the most self-sufficient, suburbs were about average, and households in the central parts of the metropolitan area were the least well-stocked.”²⁴² Although historian Dee Garrison argued that, “there is no reason to conclude that the higher self-sufficiency of farms was a result of Grandma’s Pantry[’s] message,” civil defense messaging was either not reaching citizens in all areas, or citizens were unable to afford to stockpile supplies needed to survive underground. In fact, in 1954, a study by the University of Michigan showed a comparative breakdown between metropolitan, suburban, and rural areas in terms of whether they received civil defense materials. The study showed that 28% of metropolitan and 15% of suburban residents were unaware of civil defense.²⁴³ The study also concluded that, “looking at people who reside in metropolitan areas including the suburbs, one finds that those who are nearest downtown show the greatest incidence of people reporting no information at all about civil defense.”²⁴⁴ Subsequently, the survey showed that the number of people reporting access to information about civil defense rose “steadily as one moves further and further away from the downtown area out into the distant suburb where information is high and civil defense is accepted as a necessity to a greater extent.”²⁴⁵ Although the University of Michigan survey was conducted one year prior to *Grandma’s Pantry’s* publication, it is quite obvious, and unsurprising, that a significant number of people living in the city were either not receiving or were unable to implement civil defense material even by 1954. Thus, it is unlikely that this

²⁴² Withey, 77.

²⁴³ Interestingly, a higher percentage (42%) of rural people were unaware of civil defense but this is likely due to the unlikelihood of rural areas being directly affected by a nuclear threat.

²⁴⁴ Withey, 77.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

would have changed by the time *Grandma's Pantry* was published and distributed. It is possible to conclude that, due to the increased population of Black residents in cities, a higher percentage of Black Americans were affected by the lack of civil defense material. More specifically, these residents lacked information about the importance of stockpiling food as depicted in pamphlets like *Grandma's Pantry*. In addition, owing to the financial disparities between white and Black Americans, it is likely that Black residents lacked the financial means to store such a stockpile.

Other pamphlets such as *Four Wheels to Survival* were directed specifically toward those who owned vehicles. The pamphlet explained that a car could help families move away from danger; thus, those who owned cars were encouraged to keep supplies within the vehicle to help in an evacuation.²⁴⁶ The FCDA contended that cars were basically “small movable homes” during a nuclear attack. Consequently, car owners were provided with a link to the civil defense radio broadcast known as Control of Electromagnetic Radiation (CONELRAD). CONELRAD provided extensive information necessary to prepare for an impending attack and to effectively evacuate the city.²⁴⁷ Since Black Americans had limited access to vehicles, this hindered their ability to listen to the FCDA's CONELRAD to learn of safety information. While it is true that Black Americans frequently utilized radio as a source for information, this would only help prior to an attack while Black citizens were still at home. During an evacuation, however, it would become problematic as many Black citizens would either have to walk to evacuate, therefore unable to tune into CONELRAD, or stay put. Thus, the information within these pamphlets published by the FCDA constantly reinforced the exclusionary nature which the FCDA maintained.

²⁴⁶ Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Four Wheels to Survival Pamphlet*, Ohio State Archives Series 151, Civil Defense Circulars and Directives, 1955-1961.

²⁴⁷ Matthew Farish, *The Contours of America's Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 232.

The Lack of Representation of Black Americans in Civil Defense Literature

The majority of FCDA literature abstained from portraying Black citizens, thereby both reflecting and reinforcing the racial hierarchy within the U.S. In fact, non-white families were seldomly depicted in any FCDA literature, including films; instead, white families were constantly portrayed as the ideal American family. Individual Black Americans make only limited appearances, often in films that reinforced the idea of “self-help.” For instance, in the 1951 FCDA film, *Duck and Cover*, two Black students were shown amongst a sea of white students. The film falsely claimed that one could protect themselves in a school by ducking-and-covering (instructing students to fall to their knees and cover their head to shield themselves from debris). By promoting the false belief that all individuals had the ability to protect themselves, the film transferred the onus from civil defense authorities and the federal government to the citizen. The film falsely suggested that all Americans had an equal chance of survival during a nuclear threat without taking into account citizens economic status or geography.²⁴⁸ Additionally, this implied inclusion of Black and white students helped foster an image that civil defense was for everyone despite the fact that civil defense planners never addressed the barriers that Black citizens and other racialized minorities encountered at a far greater degree than whites.

Planners believed that for civilians to effectively utilize civil defense measures to keep Americans orderly, the social hierarchy must remain intact. Portraying the post-attack period as similar to the pre-attack period lowered anxiety levels, further convincing white residents that civil defense measures were essential. For instance, the 1956 film, *The Day Called X*, depicted the evacuation of Portlanders who were, as one historian notes, “unexceptionably white and

²⁴⁸ Beth Gniewek, “Civil Defense and the Family Fallout Shelter in Early Atomic Age America, 1949-1962,” *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*, M.A. Thesis, April (2014), 54.

middle-class.”²⁴⁹ The twenty-seven minute film addressed multiple people in different occupations, including school children; all of the people shown in this film were white. While this does not necessarily imply that Black citizens were excluded from civil defense, as stated in chapter two, it is important to note that Portland was a heavily segregated city in the 1950s.²⁵⁰ This suggested that civil defense authorities sought to preserve segregation through civil defense policies and did not care for the survival of Black Americans and other poorer marginalized groups, hence the lack of portrayal of Black Americans within this film and others.

Nevertheless, when Black citizens were depicted in films, it was often in subordinate positions having to obey white superiors. Although it may seem surprising that civil defense remained white supremacist in the 1960s, even as some Civil Rights battles were won in American courts, as historians have established, legal decisions did not have immediate effects on society nor did they change white minds. Rather than desegregating schools, many white communities closed public schools and opened private segregation academies. Additionally, rather than integrate swimming pools, they filled them in and joined private swim clubs that still had the right to exclude non-white members. Accordingly, civil defense authorities continued to promote a homogenous white America in their films. In 1965, the OCD film, *Occupying a Public Shelter*, reinforced rigid social roles. As one example, the shelter manager and his security guard were middle-aged, white, authoritative men, while the nurse and the food manager were white women. The only Black person in the film was cast as a radio operator; however, he remained nameless throughout.²⁵¹ Consequently, this film reinforced the status quo, and, more specifically, reinforcing wartime roles in which white men held superior positions, followed by

²⁴⁹ Oakes, 89-90.

²⁵⁰ Portland Bureau of Planning, “The History of Portland’s African American Community (1805 to the Present),” 59.

²⁵¹ Monteyne, 1172.

white women, and then Black citizens.²⁵² This inherently portrays Black Americans as inferior, suggesting that Black citizens did not deserve to have names or “important” jobs compared to their white counterparts. Black Americans are portrayed in positions that are intended to be seen as less important. Additionally, as historian David Monteyne noted, the Black person was initially depicted as a threat until he shook the shelter manager’s hand—which symbolized the neutralization of the threat. Civil defense planners seemingly believed that civilians would only participate in civil defense if pre-existing social hierarchies remained in place.²⁵³ This belief presupposed that there could be potential racial issues if, for instance, Blacks were to take up residency in a community shelter.

Similarly, whether through cartoon drawings or actual pictures, pamphlets almost exclusively depicted white Americans with no—or minimal—reference to Black or other non-white people. This further illustrated that civil defense planners intended to depict the white population as the “general,” ideal Americans who deserved to survive an attack because they were able to help themselves. For instance, in the eight-page pamphlet known as *Facts About Fallout* (1955), all of the sketches were white people.²⁵⁴ Similarly, in *Six Steps to Survival* (1955), the front flap of the pamphlet depicted a white, middle-class, suburban, nuclear family—a husband, wife, and two children—looking at the explosion of a nuclear bomb.²⁵⁵ This pamphlet promoted the idea that an ideal white family would indeed survive a nuclear attack as long as they took all the necessary precautions. Likewise, the FCDA pamphlet *Between You and*

²⁵² This was also seen in WWII where Black Americans did play a role, but their units were segregated. They held similar roles to white Americans, but were never seen fighting alongside white Americans. Racial roles were reinforced by ensuring segregated units stayed intact.

²⁵³ Garrison, 37-38; John Preston, “Protect and Survive: ‘Whiteness’ and the Middle Class Family in Civil Defense Pedagogies,” *Journal of Education Policy* 23, no. 5 (2008), 473.

²⁵⁴ Federal Civil Defense Administration, “Facts About Fallout,” 1955. Publications of the U.S. Government, 1790-2006, Record Group 287. National Archives and Records Administration, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/306714>.

²⁵⁵ Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Six Steps to Survival*, (1955).

Disaster (1958) also reinforced the idea that a white family would survive a nuclear threat, as illustrated by a “smiling white family happily stocking the shelves of their bomb shelter.”²⁵⁶ This FCDA pamphlet assumed that those reading it would already have constructed shelters, once again largely targeting a white, suburban, middle-class community with the means to effectively construct a shelter.

Additionally, since planners believed traditional gender norms were crucial in encouraging citizens to take civil defense seriously, their literature also reflected these strict gender roles. For instance, *Fallout Protection: What to Know and Do About Nuclear Attack* (1958) showed a white nuclear family—a mother, father, and son—seeking safety within their underground shelter. In one photo, the mother and son were reading a book, while the father was completing the necessary heavy-lifting tasks to keep the shelter running smoothly; all of the members in the family were smiling.²⁵⁷ Similarly, the front page of *Emergency Sanitation at Home: A Family Handbook* (1958), depicted a white family. Throughout this pamphlet, the white family is shown completing necessary tasks in order to survive after a nuclear attack; the mother purified water while the father prepared a fire in the post-attack period.²⁵⁸ Traditional gender roles were once again reinforced in the 1961 pamphlet, *Ten for Survival: Survive Nuclear Attack* in which a white mother, father, and child fulfilled defense measures to protect themselves. The mother washed vegetables, while the father discarded outer garments contaminated by radiation.²⁵⁹ This particular pamphlet explained the supposed truth of radiation, informing readers that exposure to radiation, “can be removed by washing the skin and

²⁵⁶ Sharp, 207.

²⁵⁷ Department of Defense, Office of Civil Defense, *Fallout Protection: What to Know and Do About Nuclear Attack*, (1961) 20-26.

²⁵⁸ Department of Defense, Office of Civil Defense, *Emergency Sanitation at Home: A Family Handbook*, August 1958.

²⁵⁹ Office of Civil Defense, “Ten for Survival: Survive Nuclear Attack,” 1961. Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/tenforsurvivalsu00unitrich/page/22/mode/2up>, 17.

discarding the clothing.”²⁶⁰ The last page of this pamphlet depicted the white family safe in their shelter indicating that any family who followed precautions could survive not only the blast, but the radiation too.²⁶¹ Planners again promoted the post-attack period as similar to the pre-attack period in order to allay the emotional burdens of imagining such an event, and to encourage citizens to remain committed to the racial and gender order even after a nuclear bomb. Thus, in targeting their primary audience—white, middle-class, suburban families—planners reinforced gender and racial hierarchies.²⁶²

The Inadequate Distribution of Civil Defense Information to the Public

Despite the FCDA’s attempts to educate the public about civil defense measures through media campaigns, this information often failed to reach all Americans, especially racialized minority groups. The abovementioned 1954 University of Michigan study included an extensive survey determining how many people had been able to access this information. While the survey did not differentiate between races, it did provide a comparative breakdown between metropolitan and suburban settings, education levels, and income levels. U.S. Census data on income found that 60.2% of Black families made under \$3,000 a year in 1954.²⁶³ Moreover, Black Americans typically had less education than white Americans; in 1950, 41.8% of Black Americans had less than five years of elementary school education compared with only 8.9% of white Americans.²⁶⁴ Notably, the University of Michigan survey found that those with an income under \$2,000 (46%), a grade school education (35%), or who lived in a metropolitan area

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 22.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Gniewek, 52.

²⁶³ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Series G-1-15, *Family and Individual Income: Percent Distribution of Families and Unrelated Individuals, by Race of Head, by Money Income Levels: 1947-1970*.

²⁶⁴ John K. Folger and Charles B. Nam, “Education of the American Population,” Nam. From U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics* (2007).

(15%) were least likely to know what to do during a nuclear attack. Those who lived in the suburbs (50%), had more than a high school education (52%), and made over \$4,000 a year (45%) were the most likely to be informed about civil defense measures.²⁶⁵ These statistics reinforce that the FCDA's target audience, intended or not, was white, middle-class, suburbanites. This excluded most Black Americans who, due to historic and ongoing antiblack racism, tended to have a lower income level, less education, and to live in metropolitan areas.

Although the University of Michigan survey further revealed that Black Americans and other racialized minority groups were less likely to know about or understand what to do during a nuclear attack, this finding did not seem to change the way that the FCDA distributed public information. Even after this survey's information reached the FCDA, civil defense authorities did not adapt any policies to ensure that Black Americans and other racialized groups were better educated about civil defense safety measures. Instead, the FCDA continued to dismiss Black Americans lack of knowledge about safety measures for nuclear attacks. This remained unchanged even by the end of Eisenhower's presidency and continued into Kennedy's presidency. In 1961, the University of Michigan conducted another study to determine how much information Black communities held about civil defense measures. Astoundingly, 86% of surveyed Black Americans stated that they were uninformed about Cold War information compared with only 55% of white Americans.²⁶⁶ While the phrase "Cold War information" is admittedly vague and could mean a variety of things, it is nevertheless evident that Black citizens were not receiving the same information about civil defense measures and other Cold War-related information compared to their white counterparts. This is reinforced by the fact that the

²⁶⁵ Withey, 153.

²⁶⁶ Dorothy B. Rosenberg, "The Impact of Civil Defense Information I: An Examination of Information Levels," *Office of Civil Defense, Office of the Secretary of the Army* (June 1966), 31.

Black American newspapers examined for this thesis seldom mentioned evacuation plans, the construction of shelters, and nearby community shelters, along with the promotion of civil defense literature, compared to newspapers geared to white audiences, which extensively reported on them.

The 1954 University of Michigan study asked Americans from which media outlet they were more likely to receive civil defense information. As previously stated, this survey considered educational level, home ownership, and income. Notably, newspapers were the most common media outlet among all educational levels. Nevertheless, while those with secondary and post-secondary education relied significantly on written media, less educated residents relied more heavily on radio and television. Other media outlets such as pamphlets, booklets, movies, and magazines were also less common sources for those with less education.²⁶⁷ The survey also found similar results according to income level, noting that those who made under \$2,000 tended to rely on newspapers and radio for civil defense information.²⁶⁸ In determining how much information respondents had about civil defence measures, the survey provided options labelled “no information,” “don’t know,” and “not ascertained.” While a small percentage of those with secondary and post-secondary education chose one of these options, a much higher percentage of those with less education selected one of these three categories. Specifically, 12% of less educated participants selected the “don’t know” option, compared with only 1% of both secondary and post-secondary educated participants. Similarly, 10% of less educated participants identified with “not ascertained” while 8% of secondary educated participants and 9% of post-secondary participants identified with this group. Perhaps the most revealing statistic was that 36% of less educated participants identified with “no information” for safety measures,

²⁶⁷ Withey, 153.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 153.

compared with 17% of secondary educated participants and 6% of post-secondary participants.²⁶⁹ These statistics clearly demonstrate that lower education levels correlated with having less information about civil defense measures.

Information Distribution in Newspapers: Evacuations

The FCDA's campaign produced a large quantity of information that was disseminated in newspapers across the country; however, the FCDA either deliberately failed to provide Black American newspapers with information, or expected all Americans to read the mainstream white newspapers (and if Americans failed to read these papers, it was their own fault.)²⁷⁰ This thesis examined five Black and white newspapers from different regions of the country. While these five newspapers are not representative of the entire country, they do show regional differences in how different parts of the country disseminated civil defense information. To correlate with the theme of this thesis, in this section I specifically searched for articles pertaining to evacuations in order to examine whether or not they provided pertinent safety measures to their readership.²⁷¹ While other civil defense information may have been published in Black newspapers and white newspapers, I only searched keywords related to evacuations.

Compared to newspapers geared towards white audiences, Black newspapers published relatively little information regarding evacuation drills and safety precautions. For instance, the *New York Age*, a prominent Black newspaper based out of New York City, published two articles pertaining to evacuations.²⁷² One article mentioned a mock drill in Harlem known as "Operation Triangle." This particular drill was created by the Harlem Civil Defense Unit and would test

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 153.

²⁷⁰ Grossman, "Segregationist Liberalism," 488.

²⁷¹ The keywords I searched were "evacuation and civil defense," "evacuate and civil defense," and "mock drill and civil defense."

²⁷² This was found on www.newspapers.com under the *New York Age* where I searched keywords "evacuation and civil defense," "evacuate and civil defense," and "mock drills and civil defense."

police, fire, welfare, and hospital units in preparation for a real attack.²⁷³ While this information was useful to the Black community in Harlem, one article is not enough to assume that the Black population was receiving sufficient information on mock drills. Additionally, the only other article published provided information for Chicago, Illinois which was useless for those living in New York.

In contrast, the *New York Times* published hundreds of articles on evacuations and mock drills. This demonstrates that civil defense information was indeed successfully making its way to mainstream newspapers which happened to be read by the white population, while the Black population in New York City was not receiving enough information to protect them.²⁷⁴ On the other side of the country, newspapers in California revealed similar reporting differences. While the Black newspaper, *California Eagle*, based out of Los Angeles, did not publish any information on evacuation planning or mock drills, the *Los Angeles Times* published numerous articles on evacuation plans/drills.²⁷⁵

In Montgomery, Alabama, *The Montgomery Advertiser*, a mainstream, white newspaper, published hundreds of articles that addressed mock evacuations, and what to do during an evacuation.²⁷⁶ These particular articles addressed the FCDA's plans of moving to an evacuation method, and Montgomery's mock evacuation drills, rules, plans, and support areas.²⁷⁷ The

²⁷³ "Defense Units Will Battle 'Bombs, Fires' on Nov 14," November 10, 1951, *New York Age*.

²⁷⁴ Well over six-hundred articles were published on evacuations in *The New York Times*. This was found by searching "evacuation and civil defense," "evacuate and civil defense," and "mock drills and civil defense" as keywords on ProQuest.

²⁷⁵ This was found on the ProQuest database by searching "evacuations and civil defense" (over 700 articles were found), "evacuate and civil defense," (over 250 were found), and "mock drill and civil defense" (over 350 were found) under the *Los Angeles Times*.

²⁷⁶ This was found through www.newspapers.com by searching "evacuation and civil defense," "evacuate and civil defense," and "mock drill and civil defense" as keywords.

²⁷⁷ See, "Montgomery Has New Concept in Civil Defense, Evacuation Area Extended From 20 to 40 Miles," *The Montgomery Advertiser*, April 8, 1956; "CD Workers to Participate in 'Operation Alert,'" *The Montgomery Advertiser*, July 1, 1956; "Test Set on CD Evacuation," *The Montgomery Advertiser*, May 15, 1955; "U.S. Unprepared for Atomic War, CD Chief Warns," *The Montgomery Advertiser*, April 6, 1954.

newspaper offered maps within some articles that provided information on where readers were expected to go during an evacuation.²⁷⁸ Conversely, in the Black newspaper, *Alabama Tribune*, based out of Montgomery, there was very little information distributed pertaining to evacuations.²⁷⁹ In fact, only one article was found that spoke of evacuations, but even this information was largely useless material for the successful evacuation of the Black community as it provided no information on where one could evacuate to, how to evacuate, the route to travel on, or mock drills.²⁸⁰ It is important to note that the *Alabama Tribune* did publish many articles related to civil defense; however, these articles did not provide useful information on how to evacuate.²⁸¹

The News and Observer, based out of Raleigh, North Carolina and one of the most widely read newspapers in the state, reported abundantly on evacuations.²⁸² In fact, the newspaper not only covered “Operation Alert” drills, but even described mock evacuations taking place in schools.²⁸³ Overall, *The News and Observer* continually published articles on ever-changing civil defense methods to keep their readers informed. For example, dispersal, one of the first civil defense strategies which fell out of favour early on, was discussed in the newspaper. The newspaper articles described the difference between dispersion and evacuation methods while explaining why evacuation was more effective, thereby working to inform the

²⁷⁸ “Montgomery City & County Civil Defense Evacuation Plan,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, September 13, 1956; “City-County CD To Take Part In ‘Operation Alert’ Friday,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, July 18, 1956.

²⁷⁹ I searched for this on www.newspapers.com. I searched “evacuation and civil defense,” “evacuate and civil defense,” and “mock drill and civil defense” as keywords. Only one article pertained to these keywords when searched.

²⁸⁰ For instance, see, “Evacuation Only Answer to H-Bomb,” *Alabama Tribune*, April 8, 1955.

²⁸¹ This was found by searching “civil defense” on www.newspapers.com under the *Alabama Tribune* section.

²⁸² North Carolina’s *News and Observer* and *Carolina Times* was the most Southern newspaper I could find since I was unable to utilize archives in the U.S. for this research. Originally I planned to use a newspaper from either Florida or Georgia to gain more insight into the deep south; however, North Carolina newspapers were the most Southern newspapers that I was able to access during my research phase from home.

²⁸³ “CD Test Today: Schools to be Evacuated,” *The News and Observer*, May 21, 1957.

public of pertinent changes in policy.²⁸⁴ Other articles published in *The News and Observer* advertised civil defense meetings that the public could attend to learn more about how to properly prepare for evacuations. These meetings provided information regarding pamphlets, equipment, and literature that would aid in preparing for an evacuation.²⁸⁵ Most importantly, published articles provided all the necessary information on where to evacuate, including specific routes for each area in North Carolina to help avoid traffic jams and other issues during an evacuation.²⁸⁶

Conversely, the *Carolina Times*, a Black newspaper based out of Durham, North Carolina, published only two articles related to evacuations.²⁸⁷ These articles were published in 1955 and described the distribution of identification tags.²⁸⁸ Endorsed by FCDA director Val Peterson, identification tags were created and distributed by the FCDA to Americans to help identify each other after an evacuation. In particular, these tags would help FCDA authorities post-attack, to reunite family members. One article in the *Carolina Times* described these identification tags as easy to obtain and inexpensive, costing only twenty-five cents per tag. A subsequent article reported that identification tags were successfully distributed en masse to the American population. Information about tags was also distributed in grocery stores across the U.S., where Americans could pick up an official order form to purchase an ID tag.²⁸⁹ Whether or

²⁸⁴ “‘Paper Towns’ Are Warned,” *The News and Observer*, January 22, 1954.

²⁸⁵ “Civil Defense Discussed,” *The News and Observer*, September 15, 1954.

²⁸⁶ “Director Gives CD Plan,” *The News and Observer*, February 9, 1958.

²⁸⁷ The *Carolina Times* and *The News and Observer* are from two different cities. I was unable to locate a Black and white newspaper from the same city in North Carolina, and decided to use these two. However, the *Carolina Times* is based out of Durham, North Carolina, and *The News and Observer* is based out of Raleigh. These cities are within close proximity—roughly a thirty minute drive from each other. They are so close together that they share an airport. Therefore, I am convinced that because of their close proximity, they would share similar publications and information distribution from civil defense authorities.

²⁸⁸ These articles were found on a North Carolinian newspaper database by searching keywords of “evacuation and civil defense,” “evacuate and civil defense,” and “mock drills and civil defense.” While significantly more articles were found when searching “civil defense” on its own, the number of articles was still significantly less than what was found in *The News and Observer*.

²⁸⁹ “Civil Defense-Pet Identification Program Off To Flying Start,” *The Carolina Times*, April 23, 1955;

not the tags were purchased and worn by the Black community is difficult to tell; nevertheless, these articles demonstrate that at least some information regarding evacuations was published in the *Carolina Times*. However, as newspapers were the most likely source of information for Black people living in North Carolina, the *Carolina Times* did not provide sufficient information regarding evacuations. The lack of information in the *Carolina Times* is consistent with other Black newspapers across the country which shows that Black communities had limited access to important civil defense information.

Similar findings existed in Chicago newspapers. During the “Operation Alert” campaign, 55 American cities were instructed by the FCDA to produce a mock evacuation for training purposes in preparation of a real nuclear attack. Chicago was one of the cities expected to participate.²⁹⁰ However, *The Chicago Defender*, a prominent Black newspaper, hardly reported on mock evacuation drills that occurred in the city.²⁹¹ This further indicates that civil defense authorities did not ensure that these newspapers were providing information about the mock evacuations to their public, and likely expected the population—or at least the population they wanted to target—to read the mainstream white newspapers. Without adequate information, Black residents had little knowledge to either participate in the mock drill or safely remove themselves from the city during an attack.

In July of 1957, an article in *The Chicago Defender* titled “No Protection from A-Bomb” discussed the implications of the lack of civil defense resources for the South Side of Chicago, a predominantly Black neighbourhood. This year was a transitional period during which the FCDA recommended both evacuations and shelters as civil defense measures. If one could

²⁹⁰ “Operation Alert Biggest Test Yet: 49 Key Cities Will be ‘Hit’ Wednesday – President and 15,000 Aides to Evacuate,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1955.

²⁹¹ This was found on the ProQuest database by searching “evacuation and civil defense,” “evacuate and civil defense,” and “mock drills and civil defense,” where only twenty-one articles were found altogether.

evacuate in time, they were instructed to do so; however, if they were unable to, they were instructed to take shelter. Consequently, since the Black community lacked the means to evacuate the city effectively, they would rely heavily on shelters in the event of an attack. This article discussed the lack of shelters for those who were unable to evacuate in Black neighbourhoods. It noted that once the siren sounded, the Black community would not know what to do or where to go “for nobody told [the Black community] what to do if a real crisis should come.”²⁹² Chicago’s civil defense system, and, ultimately, the FCDA, neglected the safety and security of the Black population.

Only one 1959 article in *The Chicago Defender* discussed the barriers to evacuation for the Black community. This article observed that civil defense authorities believed that a city evacuation would take two and a half hours to complete; however, the author correctly debunked the effectiveness of evacuation by stating that there was limited warning due to the Soviet’s possession of intercontinental ballistic missiles. Specifically, the author noted that while civil defense officials believed they would have a couple hours to evacuate the entirety of Chicago, in reality, they would have fifteen minutes if an intercontinental ballistic missile were launched. However, the author noted that university scientists admitted that this window of time would be shortened if “an undersea vessel with nuclear warheads” was used by the enemy. Moreover, the article considered racial disparity by noting that “the Southside is sure to suffer the worst effects of such a disaster. And if evacuation is possible, Negroes will be the last in the line of consideration.”²⁹³ This was due in large part to the lack of safety provisions in the Southside, thus, “A nuclear blast on the perimeter of the black belt, of all probability, would incinerate the

²⁹² “No Protection from A-Bomb,” *The Chicago Defender*, July 16, 1957.

²⁹³ “They Forgot the Southside,” *The Chicago Defender*, April 20, 1959.

entire population [on the Southside].”²⁹⁴ The author clearly understood and expressed the limitations of civil defense measures for the Black community, and clearly indicated that information regarding the possibility of death was not communicated to the population.

While limited articles were published about evacuations in the *Chicago Defender*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, a prominent white newspaper, published numerous articles on the topic of evacuations.²⁹⁵ These articles discussed the vital importance of developing evacuation plans for the city of Chicago, the need for suburbs to cooperate during the evacuation, and upcoming dates for mock evacuations.²⁹⁶ One particularly interesting article provided vehicle tips for those evacuating. Specifically, the article discussed the FCDA pamphlet, “Four Wheels to Survive,” to inform readers about items they should pack to prepare their vehicle for an impending nuclear attack.²⁹⁷ No such articles were published in *The Chicago Defender*, thereby hindering the Black community’s ability to learn how to prepare for a nuclear attack and successfully evacuate.

It is evident that, throughout the country, Black newspapers were publishing limited information regarding evacuations. It is unknown that the FCDA deliberately failed to provide the adequate distribution of their information regarding evacuations and mock drills to Black newspapers; however, it is apparent that the Black newspapers were not opposed to publishing such information. This is corroborated by the fact that the majority of the Black newspapers examined did, indeed, publish on any evacuation and mock drill information that they could find throughout the period of 1950 to 1965. Therefore, it is unlikely that these newspapers did not

²⁹⁴ The author noted that there were no shelters, underground garages, or subway stations in which the Black population could take cover if they were unable to evacuate in time. The majority of this article speaks to the lack of shelters within the Black community which will be discussed in the next section; *Ibid*.

²⁹⁵ Over 450 articles were published on evacuations in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

²⁹⁶ “Civil Defense for Tight Rule on Evacuation,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 21, 1955; “City Expected to take Part in ‘Bomb’ Test Exercises Set for April 17,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 30, 1959.

²⁹⁷ “Motors Traffic Highways: Civil Defense Gives Car Tips on Evacuation,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 3, 1957.

want to publish about this information considering it was still be published to some extent. It appears that the FCDA did not ensure the adequate distribution of their information to the Black community. By not reaching out specifically to Black newspapers to ensure they had the ability to report this information, the FCDA contributed to the lack of preparation of Black communities across the nation.

Information Distribution in Newspapers: Shelters

Similar to the distribution of information on evacuations, Black newspapers published little regarding the construction of individual shelters and the placement of community shelters.²⁹⁸ One particularly interesting theme found in a couple of the Black newspapers examined was the concern about segregated community shelters, as well as their neighbours' unwillingness to share shelters with Black residents. For instance, Langston Hughes was the most critical writer about segregated community shelters in Black newspapers. Hughes' stories were published in *The Chicago Defender* starting in 1942 until 1964 and were based on a fictional character named "Simple," which Hughes said described himself.²⁹⁹ Simple's stories were set in the southern states, specifically Mississippi, where he is convinced that Black residents would be deprived of entering any community shelter.³⁰⁰ Hughes' stories refer to the growing fear among the Black population that white Americans would prevent them from entering shelters that were deemed white. He believed that these segregated shelters would be guarded and that during an attack, Black residents would be unable to enter these shelters even if they were in close proximity, exposing them to a nuclear bomb and the subsequent fallout.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ All of the articles used for this section were found by searching keywords "bomb shelter," and "fallout shelter."

²⁹⁹ W. Jason Miller, *Langston Hughes (Critical Lives)* (Reaktion Books, 2020) Kindle Edition, 97.

³⁰⁰ Rose, 110.

³⁰¹ Langston Hughes, "How Jim Crow Will Jim Crow Air Raid Shelters Be, Asks Simple," *The Chicago Defender*, March 20, 1954.

Racial hierarchy and segregation had been maintained at all levels of society in the U.S. in the mid-20th century; thus, although Hughes' stories were fictional, they were credible. Hughes and other Black Americans believed that segregated shelters existed to continue upholding racist American values.³⁰²

Hughes' stories were not the only articles that addressed the fears of the Black community in terms of civil defense. In the *California Eagle*, based out of Los Angeles, an article was published in 1950 stating that in the event of a threat, "one must wonder, who are the expendables?"³⁰³ This article particularly emphasized the fear amongst Black Americans of being seen as 'expendable' in situations where community shelters filled up, forcing Black residents to be removed to make room for more white people. These fears were once again legitimized and rationalized owing to the prevalent racial hierarchy in the U.S., and, especially in the south where it was conceivable that Black Americans would be excluded and deemed 'expendable' if there happened to be a shortage of space in these shelters.³⁰⁴

The *California Eagle* published limited articles pertaining to shelters; however, the information that was published exposed the reality of constructing shelters for the Black community in Los Angeles.³⁰⁵ One article specified three important restricting factors that the Black community endured when attempting to construct shelters in their neighborhood: the inability to construct shelters in the "congested Negro communities;" the lack of financial means of the Black community to pay for shelters; and the inability to construct a shelter in rented

³⁰² Articles were written by Hughes in *The Chicago Defender* between the years of 1942 and 1964, see: Langston Hughes, "When the Atom Comes, Negroes Goes Out Says Simple," *The Chicago Defender*, February 27, 1954; "Charged with Atoms Simple Takes Charge," *The Chicago Defender*, July 10, 1954; "Week by Week: Simple's Questionnaire," *The Chicago Defender*, June 3, 1961; "Week by Week: Simple's Atomic Dream," *The Chicago Defender*, November 1, 1961.

³⁰³ "The Expendables," *California Eagle*, September 21, 1950.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Thirty-three articles over a fifteen-year period were found when searching within the *California Eagle*. Keywords used were "bomb shelter" and "fallout shelter."

apartments.³⁰⁶ Statistics on homeownership by race in California showed that the state had a large percentage of non-white residents who rented their homes thereby likely preventing many Black residents from constructing a shelter. This article corroborates that Black homeownership was low specifically in the city of Los Angeles, and, as a result, Black Americans in Los Angeles believed that shelters were largely unattainable.³⁰⁷ While it is difficult to know whether renters would be allowed to construct a shelter, it would have been a complicated task to complete. Renters would have to have approval from their landlord, and if their landlord was white, Black renters may have encountered racial issues especially if they lived in the southern states. In addition, if they rented an apartment, it would be impossible for individual renters to construct a shelter, thus, they would have to rely on an apartment-shelter constructed by the landlord for all of the apartment building to share during an attack.

While there were few articles pertaining to shelters in the *California Eagle* compared to the *Los Angeles Times*, one of the few it printed addressed the importance of shelters to prevent deaths. This article, published on 16 November 1961, was based on an interview Linus Pauling, a Nobel-Prize winning scientist, who stated that “if fallout shelters are constructed, 97 per cent of the American people would survive.”³⁰⁸ Although likely an inaccurate percentage, it is evident that information regarding the importance of shelters was published at one point in the *California Eagle*. However, one article is not enough to assume that the Black population in Los Angeles would read or understand the necessity of constructing a shelter; consequently, the OCDM’s information failed to be distributed effectively to the *California Eagle*. Conversely, the *Los*

³⁰⁶ “There’s no Hiding Place,” *California Eagle*, November 9, 1961.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ “All Will Die in Atom War, Says Pauling,” *California Eagle*, November 16, 1961.

Angeles Times published almost 500 articles on shelters.³⁰⁹ The lack of information in the *California Eagle* is consistent with other Black newspapers across the country and displays the comparatively limited access that the Black community in Los Angeles had to civil defense information.

Only three articles were published pertaining to shelters in the *New York Age*. These three articles indicated the lack of shelters in the area known as Harlem, which was a predominately Black neighborhood in New York City. Harlem had a large Black population during the 1950s and 1960s, which was evident in the articles that were written in the *New York Age*. These articles specifically reported that there were no shelters created for Black Americans in this area; one bluntly stated the “dire need for shelters” in Harlem, and the lack of civil defense resources for the Black community.³¹⁰

Notably, the *New York Age* did not publish any articles related to shelters from 1961 to 1965. These four years were significant in terms of the Cold War as the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in 1961 and 1962 respectively, and the U.S. saw a major spike in shelter purchases.³¹¹ In contrast, the *New York Times* published the majority of their shelter articles between the years of 1960 and 1965.³¹² Evidently, civil defense information failed to reach the *New York Age* at one of the most crucial times of the Cold War.

Comparatively, the *New York Times* published over 2,000 articles on shelters, demonstrating that shelter information was indeed successfully being distributed to and effectively received by the white population in New York. The information published in the

³⁰⁹ Found through ProQuest by searching keywords such as “bomb shelter” and “fallout shelter” within the timeframe of this thesis.

³¹⁰ “Wake Up, Harlem!” *New York Age*, November 3, 1956.

³¹¹ Rose, 192.

³¹² I determined this by looking at the *New York Times* on the ProQuest database, limiting my date range from 1960 to 1965 which indicated that over 1,000 articles were published on shelters during this time period.

New York Times was much more diverse; it spoke of the price of a shelter, the necessity of a shelter, what kind of shelter to build, and where shelters could be purchased.³¹³ Unfortunately, Black Americans did not obtain similar information.

The Montgomery Advertiser, a white newspaper based out of Montgomery, Alabama, provided plenty of articles relating to shelters.³¹⁴ The newspaper articles consisted of information on what to stockpile in a shelter, independent advertisements for shelter construction and material, and company information to install home shelters for those who were willing to pay.³¹⁵ Comparatively, while the *Alabama Tribune*, a Black newspaper based out of Montgomery, Alabama, did provide some articles regarding shelters, they were few and far between.³¹⁶ Additionally, these articles did not advertise shelter material or construction companies like *The Montgomery Advertiser* did. It is evident that a significant amount of civil defense information was being distributed to the white population in Montgomery; however, this was not the case for the Black community.

In Raleigh, North Carolina, *The News and Observer* published over 100 articles related to shelters between the years of 1950 and 1965, with an escalation in the early 1960s. The spike indicates that during the crucial years of the early 1960s, white Americans were receiving the necessary information regarding civil defense. Most of the articles published promoted the

³¹³ “A Fall-Out Shelter for \$105 Unveiled,” *New York Times*, February 27, 1960; “The Shelter Dilemma: Great Confusion Exists Over What to Do,” *New York Times*, November 19, 1961; “Subsoil Bomb Shelter Marketed; Shields 6 From Blast and Fallout,” *New York Times*, January 1, 1961.

³¹⁴ This information was found on www.newspapers.com where I searched “bomb shelter” and “fallout shelter” as keywords. I limited my search from 1950 to 1965. This search provided me with over 1,000 articles relating to shelters as a civil defense tool.

³¹⁵ “Civil Defense Recommends Needed Items for Shelter,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, October 28, 1962; “Esco: Fallout & Tornado Shelter,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, August 27, 1961; “Don’t Panic and Die... Be Prepared!” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, August 7, 1961; “H-Bomb Fall-Out Shelter,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, October 11, 1961.

³¹⁶ Only about 60 matches were found when I searched the same keywords as I did for *The Montgomery Advertiser* within the same time period.

purchase of shelters, providing advertisements on where to buy a shelter and the cost: information that was not in any of the newspaper articles from the *Carolina Times*.³¹⁷ Articles in *The News and Observer* also provided information on previous shelter experiments and how people could combat boredom while sheltering, as well as resources that were required within shelters.³¹⁸ The stockpiling of items in shelters was vitally important and something that was not seen in any of the Black newspapers examined.

Dissimilarly, the *Carolina Times*, which served the Black community, published thirty-three articles specifically pertaining to shelters.³¹⁹ Two of the articles discussed courses on civil defense being offered at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and a Civil Defense Day which was set to discuss the importance of building a shelter.³²⁰ Whether Black citizens could or did attend these two events is unknown; however, since only one article was published containing this information, it is plausible that most of the Black community in Durham, North Carolina did not receive this information. Another article, published in 1962, described the psychological effects of living in a shelter for an extended period of time, offering a solution of building glass bricks into one's shelter to provide natural light.³²¹ Although this information came from civil defense authorities, the article did not provide the cost of the glass bricks, thus it is unknown whether these would be financially available for the Black community. While it is true that the *Carolina Times* received some shelter information from civil defense authorities, twenty-three articles over a fifteen year period (between 1950 and 1965) is

³¹⁷ "You Are Invited to Inspect the Gam-Ray Fallout Shelter," *The News and Observer*, October 29, 1961; "Special Notices: Fallout Shelter Open," *The News and Observer*, September 25, 1961; "Fallout Shelters," *The News and Observer*, November 12, 1961; "Special Notices: Fallout Shelters," *The News and Observer*, November 4, 1961.

³¹⁸ "Life in Bomb Shelter: Chasing Boredom Big Problem," *The News and Observer*, June 10, 1960.

³¹⁹ This was found using a North Carolinian newspaper database online. I searched keywords "bomb shelter" and "fallout shelter" where I only found twenty-two articles that spoke of such shelters.

³²⁰ "Fallout Shelter Courses Offered at A&T College," *Carolina Times*, October 17, 1964; "Civil Defense Day Set Dec. 7," *Carolina Times*, November 14, 1959.

³²¹ "Glass Brick Admits Light to Fallout Shelters," *Carolina Times*, August 4, 1962.

considerably low compared to the vast number of articles published in *The News and Observer*. Additionally, this amount of articles is not enough to assume that the entire Black population—or even a large portion of the Black population—in the Durham/Raleigh area would have read these articles. Hence, it is apparent that civil defense authorities’ information was indeed successfully being published in *The News and Observer*, while the *Carolina Times* lacked this pertinent information.

While limited articles were published about shelters in *The Chicago Defender*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* published various articles on the topic.³²² The majority of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* articles promoted the construction of shelters; notably, one particular article indicated how to turn your basement into a “life-saving shelter at a moderate cost.”³²³ The *Chicago Daily Tribune* provided their readership with instructions on how to construct a shelter, and for those who did not have shelters, it provided information on how one could still protect themselves in a basement. Although no such article was found in *The Chicago Defender*, there were articles that did in fact provide the Black community with shelter information. These articles included information on the benefits of shelters and protecting people from radioactive fallout, where to buy a shelter, the cost, and the pros and cons of building a shelter.³²⁴ While *The Chicago Defender* did provide some necessary information for the Black community, there were significantly less articles published compared to the *Chicago Daily Tribune* throughout the

³²² Over 1,000 articles were published on shelters in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. This was found by searching “bomb shelter” and “fallout shelter” on ProQuest database. In addition, less than 200 articles were found in *The Chicago Defender* when searching these keywords. Although this number seems high, this was within a fifteen year period (1950 to 1965) and therefore less than 200 articles is significantly low especially compared to the amount of articles published during this time period in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

³²³ “Basement Fallout Shelter Easily-Built Safeguard,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 15, 1961.

³²⁴ “Nuclear Attack Fallout Shelter Now Available,” *The Chicago Defender*, August 15, 1959; “Hail New Fallout Shelter As Big Move: Firm Builds Low-Cost Home, Factory Units,” *Daily Defender*, September 1, 1960; “Here’s Pros and Cons on Fallout Peril,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, November 6, 1961; “Shelter Plans,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, July 5, 1962.

period of 1950 to 1965. Consequently, it is evident that civil defense authorities in Chicago were more concerned with providing information to the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and its white readership, while not providing sufficient information to *The Chicago Defender* and neglecting the Black community.

In this particular section, I researched articles only pertaining to bomb shelters and fallout shelters. As previously stated, while I am unable to conclusively state that Black newspapers were not receiving the same distribution of information on shelters as white newspapers from civil defense authorities, it is evident that the Black newspapers examined tried to publish the information they could for their readership (as seen throughout 1950 to 1965, the Black newspapers examined did publish some articles on shelters.) Since the white newspapers examined published an abundant of articles pertaining to shelters, and the Black newspapers examined provided very few articles on shelters in comparison, it is apparent that the FCDA/OCDM were not evenly distributing their information or expected all Americans to read the mainstream white newspapers. By not ensuring the adequate distribution of their information on shelters to the Black community, this hindered their ability to successfully prepare for an attack and contributed to the lack of preparation and knowledge of shelters as a civil defense tool. Additionally, this lack of information suggested that the FCDA/OCDM—inadvertently or not—did not ensure pertinent safety information was distributed and received by Black Americans.

Information Distribution in Newspapers: Literature (Pamphlets)

In this section, I searched for information pertaining to civil defense pamphlets and films to examine whether these necessary life-saving media sources were distributed to the readership

of the ten newspapers I analyzed.³²⁵ Providing information about life-saving civil defense pamphlets and films within newspapers was essential to Americans. Newspapers, as previously stated, were the most commonly used media outlet among both metropolitan (42%) and suburban residents (27%).³²⁶ Additionally, newspapers were the most commonly used media outlet among all educational levels.³²⁷ As a result, the FCDA/OCDM's best chance to reach the entire population with their civil defense information was by promoting it in newspapers. To successfully achieve this, civil defense planners should have evenly distributed their information among both Black and white newspapers to ensure the safety of the entire public. However, as has been seen with information on evacuations and shelters, planners seemingly failed to provide sufficient information regarding necessary life-saving literature to the Black community which contributed to their lack of knowledge and understanding of both the Cold War and civil defense measures. Importantly, newspapers with a white readership consistently promoted various civil defense pamphlets within their articles, each explaining where citizens could purchase these pamphlets, why citizens should purchase them, and what information could be found in them.³²⁸ Ultimately, this limited the ability of Black Americans to protect themselves.

All of the white newspapers considered for this thesis provided sufficient, even generous, information pertaining to civil defense literature. For instance, in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, one particular article promoted the pamphlet *Home Shelters for Family Protection in an Atomic Attack* and provided necessary information about how much it would cost and where to purchase this pamphlet. Interestingly, this article stated that the information within this pamphlet would

³²⁵ Within all of the newspapers, I searched keyword "civil defense pamphlets."

³²⁶ Withey, 92.

³²⁷ Withey, 153.

³²⁸ See, "Chicago A-Bomb Program Leads Federal Agency: City Booklet Tells How to Build Shelter," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 5, 1953; "New Pamphlet Issued," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 6, 1961; "How to Guard Against the Perils of Fallout: Booklets Can Save Your Life," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 19, 1961; "20 Booklets on Atom Radiation Are Available," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 8, 1961.

explain “build-it-yourself” techniques “that any householder should be able to follow.”³²⁹

Similarly, another article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* noted that Boy Scouts would distribute civil defense pamphlets “to 83,000 homes in the west suburban area beginning Saturday.”³³⁰

This particular article offered no mention about whether any of these Boy Scouts would be distributing this pertinent information to central cities where Black communities were located. In fact, no article within this newspaper stated whether or not Boy Scouts would be delivering pamphlets to the central city. This demonstrates that civil defense planners were targeting suburban homeowners, not city residents.

Comparatively, *The Chicago Defender*—a newspaper with a primarily Black readership—provided relatively little information pertaining to civil defense literature. Only two articles provided information on pamphlets and explained where readers could purchase them.³³¹ This was a significantly smaller amount than what was published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*; likewise, two articles is not sufficient enough to assume the majority or even a large percentage of *The Chicago Defender*’s readership read this necessary information. Consequently, civil defense planners failed to ensure that Black newspapers were publishing this information. In so doing, civil defense officials perpetuated racial inequities that effected the survival of Black Americans.

Similar findings can be seen on the other side of the country in Los Angeles, California. Several articles in the *Los Angeles Times* promoted civil defense pamphlets to citizens, such as “Civil Defense Approves Atomic Injury Pamphlet,” which—as stated in the name—provided

³²⁹ “Booklet Tells How to Build Bomb Shelter: FCDA Issues Manual for Home Use,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 2, 1953.

³³⁰ “Scouts to Distribute Safety Books,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 9, 1958.

³³¹ “Berlin Crisis Sparks Interest in More Family Fallout Shelters,” *The Chicago Defender*, August 19, 1961; “How to Survive After Nuclear Attack,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, January 2, 1962.

step-by-step instructions for first-aid treatment of someone injured by the atomic bomb.³³² Additionally, the *Los Angeles Times* provided adequate information on when citizens could expect to receive civil defense pamphlets and where they could obtain them.³³³ In contrast, the *California Eagle*—a Black newspaper—published only one article on civil defense pamphlets. “All Life Can Be Snuffed Out by Fallout, Authorities Say” provided information from a pamphlet entitled *Defense Against Radio-Active Fallout on the Farm*, which addressed the effects of fallout on farmland, crops, and livestock.³³⁴ This pamphlet was specifically targeted at farmers and, as the article stated, advised farmers to read the pamphlet to help them prepare for potential fallout that could result on their land after a nuclear bomb. More specifically, the pamphlet provided information on the danger of allowing their herd to graze on a pasture that had been contaminated by fallout, the effects of an urban population relocating to farming land, and the farming areas that would be best suited for continuing to grow crops and livestock during an attack. While this information may have been useful to some Black readers, it was likely irrelevant to the majority of the newspaper’s readership since most Black residents lived in central cities during the 1950s. In addition, since the majority of the *California Eagle*’s readership likely resided within the city of Los Angeles, this particular article would be useless for city residents as it only provided information for farmers to help protect their livestock and land. Moreover, one article promoting a civil defense pamphlet is insufficient evidence to

³³² “Civil Defense Approves Atomic Injury Pamphlet,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 7, 1952. Other articles that promoted civil defense in the *Los Angeles Times* include: “Atomic Energy, Civil Defense Eyed at Two Separate Events,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 1957; “Fallout Shelter Pamphlet Praised as Distribution Confusion Eases: Fallout Booklet,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 1962.

³³³ See, “Defense Booklet Distribution Begins as Berry Takes Office: Admiral Sworn in for Civilian Post,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 1951; “Mail, Phone Calls Pour in on Civil Defense Office: Public ‘Awake’ at Last? West Side Awakening to Civil Defense Role,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1961; “Post Offices Offering Free CD Pamphlet,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1962.

³³⁴ “All Life Can Be Snuffed Out by Fallout, Authorities Say,” *California Eagle*, August 1, 1957.

assume that the majority of the readership would utilize, or even have knowledge of, civil defense material.

In Raleigh, North Carolina, civil defense pamphlets were often discussed in the white newspaper, *The News and Observer*. Similar to the previous white newspapers mentioned, *The News and Observer* published information promoting pamphlets. These articles stressed the importance of obtaining and reading these pamphlets so that reader would be equipped with the necessary materials for a potential nuclear attack.³³⁵ Comparatively, significantly less information on civil defense literature was published in the Black newspaper, the *Carolina Times*. Notably, only one article provided information about civil defense literature to their readership. This article entitled, “Civil Defense Day Set Dec. 7,” provided information about a pamphlet entitled *The Family Fallout Shelter*. Although the article did not provide information directly from the pamphlet, it explained to readers where they could purchase the pamphlet.³³⁶ Evidently, information regarding pertinent civil defense literature failed to reach the *Carolina Times*, hindering the Black community’s ability to take action to prepare for a nuclear threat.

In *The New York Times*, similar information was published as in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*.³³⁷ One article published on 31 December 1961 discussed the importance of the pamphlet known as *Fallout Protection: What to Know and What to Do About Nuclear Attack*. This two-page article explained each section of the forty-eight page pamphlet and highlighted the cost and materials necessary to construct a safe shelter.³³⁸ Similar to the other white newspapers

³³⁵ See, “Air Raid Signals Announced,” *The News and Observer*, December 15, 1950; “Civil Defense Mails Booklets,” *The News and Observer*, August 4, 1951; “Tips Given for Stocking Food in Fallout Shelter,” *The News and Observer*, September 4, 1961; “Federal Study Tells How to Survive,” *The News and Observer*, December 31, 1961.

³³⁶ “Civil Defense Day Set Dec. 7,” *Carolina Times*, November 14, 1959.

³³⁷ Upon researching newspaper articles within *The New York Times*, over 700 results were found between the dates of 1950 and 1965.

³³⁸ “U.S. Gives Public Atom-Raid Advice: Free Pamphlet Available on Tuesday, Tells What to Expect and How to Act,” *The New York Times*, December 31, 1961.

discussed, *The New York Times* provided numerous articles promoting the importance of civil defense pamphlets.³³⁹ Notably, one article even provided a reprint of a pamphlet itself. This pamphlet highlighted pertinent information for *The New York Times*' readership to acquaint themselves with the nuclear bomb, its heat wave, fallout, blast, and how to properly prepare.³⁴⁰

Comparatively, the *New York Age* provided little information regarding civil defense literature. Remarkably, one article did question the feasibility of the information within one pamphlet, entitled *You and the Atomic Bomb*. This particular article questioned the viability of seeking shelter. Since the pamphlet suggested citizens should tend to those who were injured post-attack, this article also questioned whether civil defense authorities had considered that medical facilities may be unavailable after an attack.³⁴¹ Importantly, this article addressed realistic issues that civil defense planners either ignored, or failed to address. This article demonstrated the Black community's valid skepticism and confusion over civil defense. If these issues had been previously addressed by planners, whether through their literature or other means, clearly this information had not reached the Black community in New York City. Moreover, as the only article published about civil defense literature in the *New York Age*, its presence also suggests that the Black community in New York City was significantly less informed about civil defense measures than the white community.

In Montgomery, Alabama, the Black newspaper, the *Alabama Tribune*, published very limited information regarding civil defense literature. One article provided a succinct discussion

³³⁹ See, "Information on First Aid: Civil Defense Unit Issues Booklet on Emergency Treatment," *The New York Times*, July 15 1951; "Safety Booklet Issued: First in Boy Scout Drive Goes to Civil Defense Aide Here," *The New York Times*, September 9, 1958; "What Home Shelter Should Include," *The New York Times*, September 3, 1961; "U.S. Booklet Gives 8 Shelter Designs," *The New York Times*, February 7, 1962.

³⁴⁰ This is the only article found while researching newspapers that provided a whole photographic reprint of a civil defense pamphlet; "U.S. Booklet, Photographically Reproduced, on What to Do About a Nuclear Attack," *The New York Times*, December 31, 1961.

³⁴¹ "That the People Should Know: Atom-Bomb Defense," *New York Age*, October 7, 1950.

on the pamphlet *The Family Fallout Shelter*, which instructed citizens on how to build a “simple home shelter.”³⁴² Meanwhile, the *Montgomery Advertiser*, a white newspaper, published many articles promoting civil defense literature.³⁴³ White newspapers consistently encouraged their readership to obtain copies of civil defense pamphlets.

Much like published information about evacuations and shelters, Black newspapers did not publish the depth of information for their readership compared with white newspapers. The white newspapers that published heavily on these pamphlets were providing their readership with the best tools to survive the nuclear bomb. In contrast, the Black newspapers that did not publish this information were hindering their readerships ability to protect themselves. As stated before, it is unknown, but unlikely, that the newspapers intentionally failed to publish civil defense literature. The newspapers that published very little still made an effort in the fifteen year period that I examined to provide their readership with some safety information, albeit limited. If they wanted to protest by not publishing any FCDA/OCDM content, it would not make sense to publish any information at all. In addition, it would only hinder the lives of their community/readership by not providing these safety instructions. Thus, it is apparent that civil defense planners repeatedly failed to ensure the adequate distribution of literature to the Black community. By failing to ensure that Black newspapers were receiving and distributing this information to their readership, civil defense planners again contributed to the Black community’s lack of preparation and understanding of civil defense measures. Similar to the lack of information about evacuations and shelters, planners continued to ignore the fact that Black Americans were not provided with adequate information to protect themselves.

³⁴² “Hoegh Says Every Family Needs A Fallout Shelter,” *Alabama Tribune*, August 21, 1959.

³⁴³ See, “You – And You –,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, February 11, 1951; “Emergency Steps Set for Covington County,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, October 27, 1962; “Preparedness Steps Needed to Live Through Disasters,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, November 29, 1964.

Conclusion

Civil defense planners' campaign to distribute literature about safety measures for a nuclear attack was largely targeted at the white, middle-class, suburban population, and it failed to account for the ways that many Black families faced different challenges in preparing for a nuclear attack. In reviewing films, pamphlets, and newspapers, it is obvious that civil defense literature was intended for the white, middle-class, suburban, nuclear families. Civil defense planners ignored the societal, financial, and geographic barriers that hindered the Black community's ability to learn about and construct defense measures. Instead, civil defense planners capitalized on these delimiting factors to further reinforce racial hierarchies.

CONCLUSION

In a period of potential nuclear annihilation, the American federal government was compelled by their concern for “emotional management” to offer citizens some ideas about how to survive if the USSR dropped a bomb on them. This was a period of panic and fear for all Americans as they had previously watched what had occurred in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, this was also a period of confusion for residents as each President—from Truman to Eisenhower to Kennedy—changed their civil defense advice and plans. Owing to this, no civil defense method was ever fully developed. The Truman Administration never committed to a specific civil defense method; at one point, dispersions were viewed as the best tactic of survival, while subsequently community shelters were seen as the most effective. Eisenhower’s presidency saw the atomic bomb become more destructive; the hydrogen bomb further exacerbated Americans fears. This forced Eisenhower, who was cognizant of the expense of a national community shelter program, to alter his previous evacuation method. He promoted a strategy of evacuations coupled with the construction of individual shelters. When Kennedy came into office, he urged Congress to provide the funds so that the OCDM could build a national community shelter program for residents. All of these presidents at one point still advocated for residents to take responsibility for their own protection pre- and post-bomb. Despite all of their attempts to encourage residents to take the necessary precautions, poorer and marginalized groups—especially Black Americans—were left largely unequipped.

The lack of safety measures for Black Americans appears surprising as, during this time, the Civil Rights Movement was making some gains for the Black community.³⁴⁴ All of these presidents at one point had implemented legislation that many hoped would benefit the Black

³⁴⁴ As stated in chapter three, the Civil Right gains for Black Americans were minimal. Legal changes were only useful if people could afford lawyers and the cost of lawsuits, and they were not immediately effective.

community. Under the Truman Administration, segregation within the U.S. Armed Forces was abolished in 1948 (through Executive Order 9981). The Supreme Court ruled in favour of racial desegregation in decisions such as the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954). Furthermore, in 1955, Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10590 which implemented the enforcement of the federal government's policy of non-discrimination in federal employment. All of these cases laid the groundwork for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that were eventually signed by President Johnson but were initially pursued by the Kennedy Administration.

It is telling that while the federal government throughout the 1950s and 1960s was passing federal legislation that ostensibly provided more security to Black residents' rights, they continually dismissed the barriers that Black Americans faced in terms of civil defense, leaving them largely unequipped for a nuclear disaster. Although the FCDA/OCDM clearly could not have addressed all these barriers—including housing restrictions and financial disparities, for example—the fact that Black Americans lived in densely populated urban areas, and lacked automobiles and homes that could be easily equipped with shelters meant that the civil defense self-help measures they advocated were largely out of reach for most of them. Yet housing and income inequality were issues that the federal government could try to change, and eventually would attempt to address in the 1960s and onwards with the creation of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). While the 1950s saw some limited progress in Civil Rights, it was clear with the lack of federal intervention that both the government and civil defense officials were more inclined to uphold the status quo, ensuring racial hierarchy remained steadfast. They could not even muster enough interest in saving Black lives to effectively communicate via Black newspapers, which

would have been a relatively simple way to reach more Black Americans since newspapers were the most commonly used media outlet among all Americans.

Civil defense authorities never stated their intentions of upholding racial hierarchy and segregation. This is in line with U.S. federal practices since the end of Reconstruction, when it decidedly left racist laws in place by allowing the states to “govern themselves” on such matters. As had been true during the New Deal in the 1930s, federal programs intended for “all Americans” were administered by states that discriminated in favor of whites and to the disadvantage of Black citizens. Similarly, while civil defense was a federally-led effort to protect “all Americans,” the states ultimately controlled the budget for implementing civil defense plans, and the reliance on “self-help” campaigns aimed at encouraging individual households to evacuate in their personal vehicles and construct shelters while ensuring they were stocked with supplies meant that only the Americans with the financial means could actually prepare to survive a nuclear bomb. It is quite clear in the civil defense literature, the lack of adequate distribution of information to both Black and white communities, and, perhaps more importantly, from the studies that were conducted on behalf of the FCDA/OCDM on the American population, that civil defense methods had no intention of disrupting white supremacy. These studies clearly revealed that Black Americans lacked knowledge of civil defense information and therefore could not prepare for survival, not to mention that pre-existing inequalities prevented most from accessing the material necessary to do so. What is intriguing is that some of these studies were conducted early on; for instance, the NAS study on “Operation Scat” and the University of Michigan study were both completed in 1954. These studies demonstrated to the FCDA that while their information was largely received by the suburban, white, middle-class communities, those who comprised either the lower socioeconomic class,

had less education, resided in urban areas, or belonged to racialized groups did not receive the relevant information. Thus, the FCDA was aware from early on that they were not reaching all Americans (and perhaps they did not care due to racism). Furthermore, a Columbia University study was conducted in 1964, and, perhaps the most important study was conducted by the Department of Defense in the 1960s which provided information that proved marginalized groups were less likely to receive civil defense. Why were the FCDA and OCDM not changing their distribution tactics when they knew their distribution tactics failed to reach the majority of the population? It is evident that from all the studies conducted on behalf of the FCDA and OCDM that civil defense officials *knew* about the lack of preparation of racialized groups, but apparently they were not concerned about this. These studies proved to civil defense officials that certain groups of people were not receiving pertinent survival information nor did they have the ability to utilize these methods. Astoundingly, in 1955, the FCDA admitted that racialized groups were less likely to receive civil defense information.³⁴⁵ Indeed, civil defense officials continued to implement, promote, and distribute survival information in a way that only targeted their ideal white American family.

The question arises of whether civil defense policies were feasible solutions to a nuclear bomb throughout this time period, and more specifically, when the hydrogen bomb had been developed. Did civil defense authorities know that civil defense would be useless in providing protection from a nuclear bomb? Was this a form of psychological manipulation to limit mass panic amongst the population? While these questions are difficult to conclusively answer, it is likely that civil defense methods would fail in some cases. For instance, shelters would likely provide little protection for those seeking cover from such a weapon. Those that were hit

³⁴⁵ McEnaney, 140.

directly would likely face the reality of a bomb shelter collapsing in on them and inability to escape, while those that were not in the direct line of fire would likely face deadly radiation or suffocation in a shelter. Furthermore, evacuations would be impossible in major cities especially after the development of ICBM's and decreased warning times. Yet, this still proves that civil defense authorities were more inclined to protect the white, suburban, middle-class families who would likely face limited effects of the bomb as compared to those in the target zones. These families would be able to take cover in their shelters away from the radiation, fire, and debris that the bomb would cause. As a result, even if civil defense authorities knew that civil defense methods were likely to fail for the majority of Americans living in the target areas, they did nothing to counter this. It still remained true that civil defense authorities did not care to help save Black Americans nor offer them any psychological relief that would make them believe that they may survive if they participated in civil defense.

Moreover, the question of intentionality also arises when looking at the exclusion of Black Americans and other racialized groups in civil defense policy. Even if civil defense officials did not *intend* to implement racist policies that excluded racialized minorities, these methods were still largely inaccessible to these groups of people, and, as a result, it left these people more vulnerable in the event of an attack. These groups were largely unable to purchase homes in areas where they were less vulnerable to attack, tools that they needed to survive an attack, and information that they needed to understand what to do during an attack. Whether civil defense officials intended to exclude racialized minorities or not, it did not matter. One thing is certain, civil defense officials did not make the effort to help these groups of people, and as such, they contributed to the lack of awareness and preparedness of racialized minorities when it came to civil defense methods.

By exploring Black Americans' societal, financial, and geographic disparities in relation to white Americans, I have, in this thesis, analyzed and demonstrated the racism that underwrote civil defense policy. It is clear that civil defense officials and the federal government were cognizant of the limited access that Black Americans had to civil defense. Black Americans were largely unable to afford expensive civil defense materials and they largely resided in cities which were deemed by civil defense officials as the "critical target areas." Those who could financially afford homes in the suburbs were kept out by red-lining and racist covenants. They were left largely unaware of civil defense methods, drills, and further information that could protect them; and, even if Black residents had access to a community shelter, it was likely that they would encounter racism and discrimination in attempting to enter or stay in one.

As a result, it is evident that civil defense, from the commencement of the FCDA to the supposed end of Jim Crow in 1965, continually upheld racial hierarchy and segregation rather than advocating for a civil defense plan that would have preserved Black American lives. Civil defense officials believed that by ensuring residents that the continuation of the status quo and racial hierarchy would remain in the post-attack period, their ideal Americans—the white, middle-class, suburbanites—would be more inclined to participate in civil defense actions. It was clear, Black lives did not matter to civil defense officials.

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