

FINAL PLAN

We plan on weaving our history, demographics, and interviews together to focus on some major themes that have come up during research and which are included in our argument. So, the final product will not have history, demographics, and interviews completely sectioned off as they appear here. The themes we've come across are: displacement & housing; economic development; diversity & integration; and crime & safety. We find that gentrification has had led to both positive and negative outcomes in these areas and that feelings towards gentrification are varied across racial lines. Topics covered in this class, particularly symbolic interactionism, cultural convergence, agency/structure, and succession will be used as vehicles to explain those differences in perception.

Our website page will be based predominately on a map of the Columbia Heights neighborhood. The map will help illustrate the physical structures and symbols within the neighborhood that demonstrates changes in history and demography, as well as that highlight the existence of a new neighborhood within the old Columbia Heights. These structures will be marked on the map and pop ups will have historical anecdotes that explain the significance of the change that underwent there and those will tie back to one of the four main themes or topics mentioned previously. Pictures of the current manifestation of the place, as well as of the old manifestation (if available will be made available). If relevant, quotes from interviews will be included in the pop up as well.

A separate section will be dedicated to including the history of the overall neighborhood. Interwoven in that history will be the charts and graphs which help highlight or emphasize some of the points in the history or which demonstrate the relevancy of certain historical events.

There will also be hyperlinks embedded that take those looking at the website to different videos on Columbia Heights. Those videos are included below.

Disclaimers:

- Comments for the demographics piece have not yet been addressed, but will be soon.
- There are charts/graphs which had been prepared for the Part 2 deadline but appear to have been accidentally excluded when Part 2 was submitted. Those are the charts on: income, employment, housing, incarceration, crime, and HIV.
- Some of the interviews included bolded sections which are ones that will be used on the final product. Because of time not all the interviews were bolded.
- The final product will be much less text heavy than it is now/much of the text will be excluded.

ARGUMENT

Gentrification is a complex and nuanced phenomenon that cannot be looked at in black and white. Although the gentrification of Columbia Heights has undoubtedly negatively impacted and displaced many individuals and small businesses, the process has overwhelmingly created a diverse, safer, and more economically thriving neighborhood which ultimately still retains many original residents and history.

HISTORY

Boarded-up houses and sides of buildings marked (or marred) with graffiti betray the bright, shiny new shopping complex which dominate most of Park Road in Columbia Heights; there is a history here, one which is not made visible - or perhaps been erased - with the conception of the "new" Columbia Heights.

At its inception at the start of the twentieth century, the neighborhood was a wealthy white residential area characterized by single-family homes and buildings which signified grandeur and luxury, like the Tivoli theater (now a Z-Burger) and the Arcade (now a Target). A *Statement of Some of the Advantages of Beautiful Columbia Heights: A Neighborhood of Homes*, a brochure published in 1904 by the Columbia Heights Citizens Association, interestingly touches on a point made by T.J. Sugrue (1996) regarding the importance of home ownership to the white identity during this period and in the period continuing into the Civil Rights Movement. The brochure states, under the subheading 'Desirable Neighbors:' "to give an idea of the stable character of the population of Columbia Heights, attention is called to the fact that nowhere else in the District do so large a population of the inhabitants own the buildings in which they live... [and] nowhere in the District of Columbia can be found a community freer from the objectionable classes than that on the 'Heights'" (Columbia Heights, 1904). It can be concluded that the "objectionable classes" mentioned here refer namely immigrants and blacks, considering the time period in which it was published.

The neighborhood experienced a demographic shift which occurred most dramatically at the start of the 1950's, most notably during an intense period of segregation in both the District and the country. Columbia Heights transformed into a predominantly black, middle-class neighborhood. The introduction of black residents into the area can be partially attributed to the close proximity of Howard University, which many "upper crust" African-Americans attended (Cultural Convergence: Columbia Heights Heritage Trail). The neighborhood's black population increased further with the reestablishment of Cardozo Business High School (formerly Central High School) as an all-black school in 1949 due to surrounding area black schools becoming overpopulated. Of course, with the demographic transition the neighborhood as whites fled to the suburbs led to drops in real estate values. The riots of 1968 devastated the neighborhood; businesses and homes were left in ruin as a result of looting, fires and other damage, and many remained boarded shut as some residents left the area, leaving few behind to pick up the pieces and without the resources to do so.

At the intersection of 14th and Monroe Streets N.W. is one of the nineteen "Cultural Convergence" boards, part of the Columbia Heights heritage trail, a 2.9 mile trail which circles the neighborhood. These notable yellow signs and "keepsake guide[s]" published by Cultural Tourism DC serve to "summarize [the] stories [of] Washington D.C.'s historic neighborhoods... that reflect our nation's history and describe how we became who we are as communities." This particular Cultural Convergence board is titled "After the Hard Times" and intends to provide insight into the aftermath of the riots of 1968, stating they began "in response to the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr... [leaving] the 14th street corridor devastated... but from despair grew hope." This explanation of the riots seems decidedly brief and simplistic. Gilbert (1968), in his novel *Ten Blocks from the White House: Anatomy of the Washington Riots of 1968*, explicitly questions this exact explanation as the cause for the riots. He asks, "what were the Washington rioters in April, 1968, trying to say? Were they simply angered by the untimely death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr....Or did they have something else to say to the city of Washington and the world at large... and what was the reply? Was it the beginning of a dialogue or the end of a conversation that never really started" (ix)? It seems apparent that Gilbert's (1968) questions are rhetorical; perhaps it was King's death which acted as the final catalyst for riots which really had been brewing in black communities which had been marginalized in nearly all elements of their lives, from education to housing, and targeted for violence from both the state and private

citizens since their arrival in the United States. It is certainly much more complex than the Cultural Convergence board indicates.

It is telling that this critical moment in time - for the future of the Civil Rights Movement, for the black community in D.C. and specifically in Columbia Heights, and for the development of D.C. as a city following the riots - is almost entirely glossed over in a historical account of the neighborhood, published by the city and intended to be seen by residents and tourists alike. To the knowing reader, the conspicuous absence of this information seems like a purposeful attempt by the city to erase a period in time that was critical to the black community.

For the remainder of the 1970's, Columbia Heights was, according to a 1998 article in the *Washington Post*, "a mix of low-income blacks, bohemian-minded whites and small clusters of legal immigrants from countries like Chile and Bolivia" (Constable). This demographic mix shifted in the early 1980's, when civil war in El Salvador resulted in a massive influx of El Salvadoran refugees into D.C., in particular to the Columbia Heights neighborhood, "pushing the District's Latino population from less than 5,000 to more than 70,000" (Constable, 1998). Although the demographics had begun to shift slightly, economic conditions in the neighborhood did see significant improvement; this was in part because the neighborhood had struggled to rebuild itself after the riots in '68 and because many of the Salvadoran refugees came to the country with little education or money, and often lacking English language skills, leaving them with little resources to attempt to rebuild the neighborhood themselves. Conditions for second-generation Salvadorans were not much better; Constable (1998) writes in her article "In the Barrio, All Face a Struggle" how the new generation of Latino immigrants still "lived in crowded apartments with parents who [spoke] little English" with many young people "dropping out of school, getting pregnant, doing drugs or joining gangs," issues which could likely be attributed to the lack of both public and private resources in the Columbia Heights neighborhood at the time (*The Washington Post*).

The riots of 1968 were not the last time the residents Columbia Heights would witness them. A riot broke out in 1991 between black and Latino youth in Mt. Pleasant after an El Salvadoran man was murdered by a police officer at a Cinco de Mayo celebration. Although the riot did not occur specifically in Columbia Heights, the ripple effects were felt in the neighborhood when a state of emergency was declared and a curfew enacted by the mayor (Sanchez 1991).

After experiencing several decades of economic struggle in the neighborhood as a result of riots and a significant population which lived in or close to poverty (33% in 1990) without adequate private and state resources, Columbia Heights was met with rapid economic development following the opening of the Columbia Heights metro station in 1999. The addition of this station made the neighborhood much more accessible to D.C.'s middle class commuters, and with them came their cash flow. The city invested in various large scale retail developments in the area immediately around the station which attracted a white, middle class demographic. Exiting the train station at 14th and Irving Streets, as one makes their way North up 14th Street, one encounters chain eateries like Cava, Starbucks, Chipotle, and Z Burger. The presence of these chain eateries pose some threat to locally owned eateries that existed prior because of the predominant Black and Latinx population of the neighborhood, but many businesses that existed before still thrive, such as Los Hermanos, a Dominican restaurant that opened in 1995, which remains a local haunt which still flourishes even with the new competition (Codik 2016). But the influx of new businesses also represent the growing dominance of corporate institutions, which having emerged nationally only within the past 30 years, are targeting millennials.

Today, where buildings once burned and twelve people were killed during the 1968 riots, the intersection of 14th and U streets, still known to many who work and live there and simply go there for fun as “the corridor,” is a hip area generally referred to simply as “U Street.” Bars, speakeasies, clubs and restaurants line the streets; a McDonald’s stands on the corner, always a brightly-lit red-and-orange beacon for drunk and hungry young adults on a Saturday night as well as homeless people who need a warm place to sit for a while. Their heads lull into their coats as groups of what appear to be college students of all ethnicities clamor around them, flirting, yelling, talking, licking soft serve, eating fries, seemingly oblivious to them. Young people and older ones, white, black, Latino, and other ethnicities alike come for a night out on U Street.

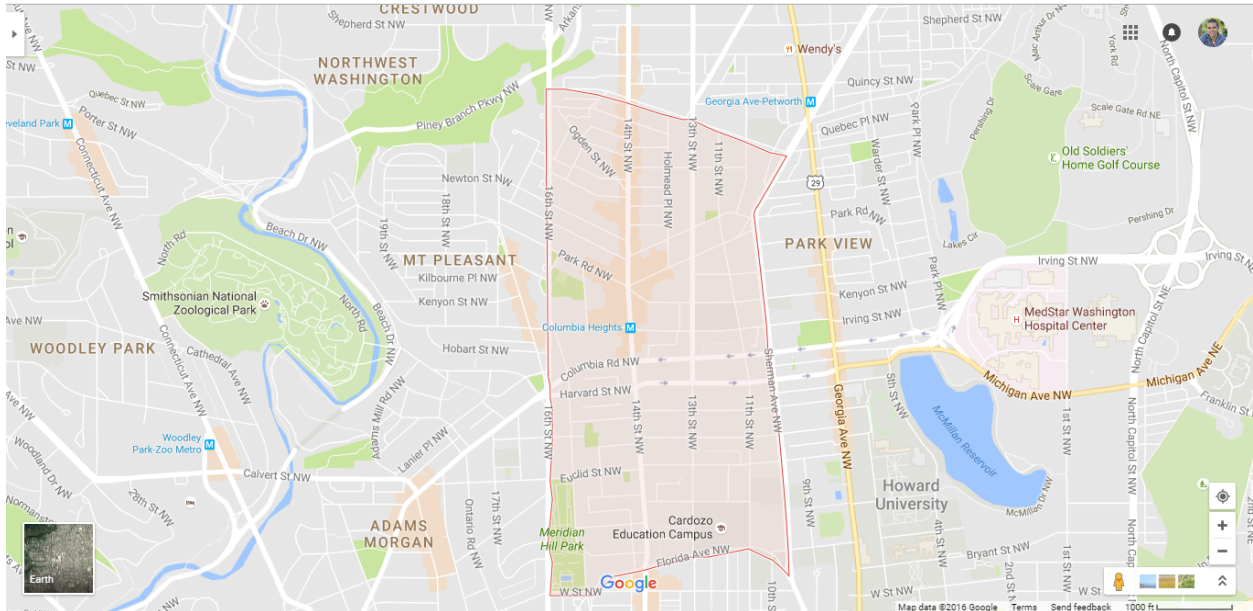
In regards to housing, multi-use, upscale apartment buildings have sprung up on the five North-South blocks surrounding the station. Most of the apartment buildings offer studio or one-bedroom apartments that complicates living arrangements for families with children seeking to live there. These housing complexes have replaced many of the family-oriented town houses that once littered these streets. These town houses, as well as family business are found further down 14th street or on the perpendicular streets - a good five blocks from the station. Due to lack of space, a challenge for any metropolitan city, and building-height restrictions (the Height of Buildings Act of 1910 restricts most buildings in D.C. from being over 13 stories), many of these town houses are multi-functional, housing both families and businesses. Construction is taking place in this junction of new and old Columbia Heights, so if the pattern of gentrification continues it is very likely that the Black and Latinx population of the neighborhood will be pushed further down 14th and away from the station as upscale housing not accessible to many of the original residents continues to be built.

The most imposing structure in Columbia Heights is DC USA, a large, 890,000 square foot retail space anchored by big box stores like Bed, Bath and Beyond, Best Buy, Staples, and Target. These are amongst the few big box stores in the entire district. The DC USA Target is actually the only one within D.C. city limits. As a result, Columbia Heights remains a neighborhood capable of drawing into its limits diverse groups of people, even fifteen years after the train station first began the gentrification process. These factors have helped maintain Columbia Heights as the most economically and racially diverse neighborhood in all of D.C.

The issue which comes to light after thorough research as most pertinent to the Columbia Heights neighborhood is that of gentrification. A colorful mural outside of Tubman Elementary School in the center of Columbia Heights illustrates the many identities and characteristics of the neighborhood. What is Columbia Heights? Emblazoned next to the face of one beautifully painted resident is an answer: “a mix of cultures that is fascinating.” Others state that Columbia Heights is “diverse,” and “really musical, lively.” Wogan (2015) points out that “next to one painting of an African-American teenage boy, the observation is more ambivalent: ‘It’s changing.’” A national report conducted by *Governing* regarding gentrification in the fifty largest cities in the United States classified neighborhoods within cities into three categories: gentrified, not gentrified, or not eligible to gentrify. In D.C., Columbia Heights has been classified as gentrified (Fordham Institute 2012). According to the census, home values in Columbia Heights have risen a staggering 159%, providing quantitative evidence as to why residents who have lived in Columbia Heights prior to 2000 often have trouble remaining in the area (Governing 2015). Wogan (2015) goes on to discuss how plans for new housing in Columbia Heights were made with the intention to keep as many original residents in the neighborhood as possible; this was thought to be feasible because the district “had at its disposal some of the strongest affordable housing protection laws in the country” (Wogan 2015), but these were not enough to stop the displacement of lower-income residents as they moved out of the neighborhood in droves.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Neighborhood Maps



- Map showing boundaries of Columbia Heights neighborhood.
- Brown shades show the central business district. Most business centered on the Metro station.
- Neighborhood has little green space - Meridian Hill Park.
- MedStar Washington Hospital Center is located close to neighborhood, but there is no community based health center. Many residents likely resort to going to emergency room.



28.01

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28.02

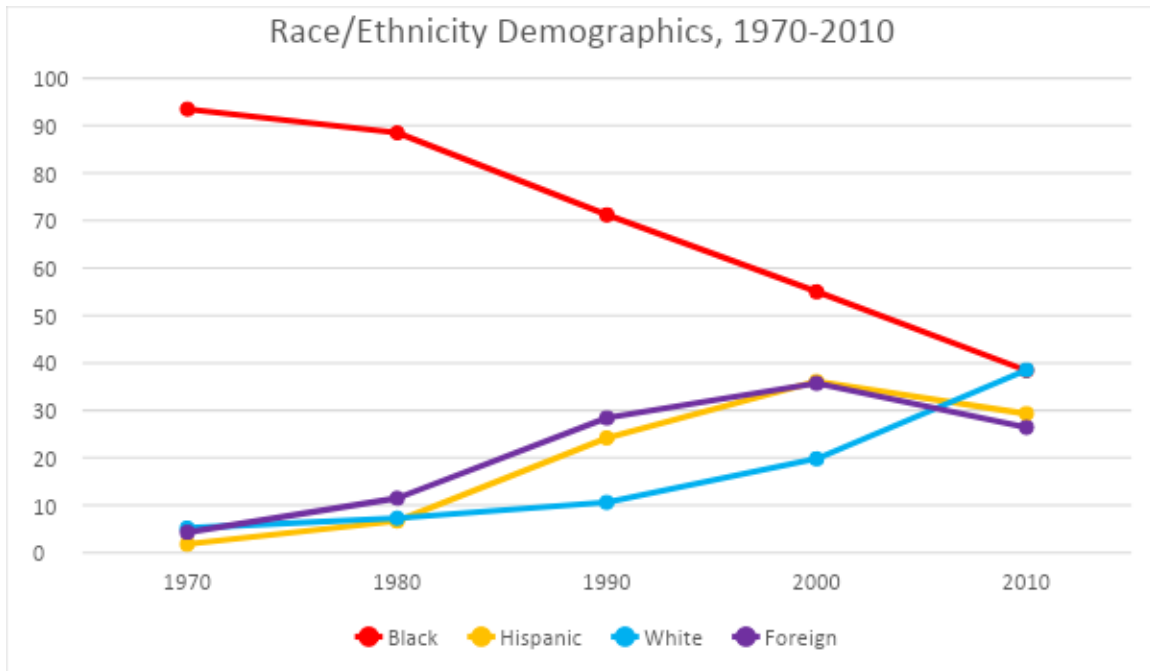
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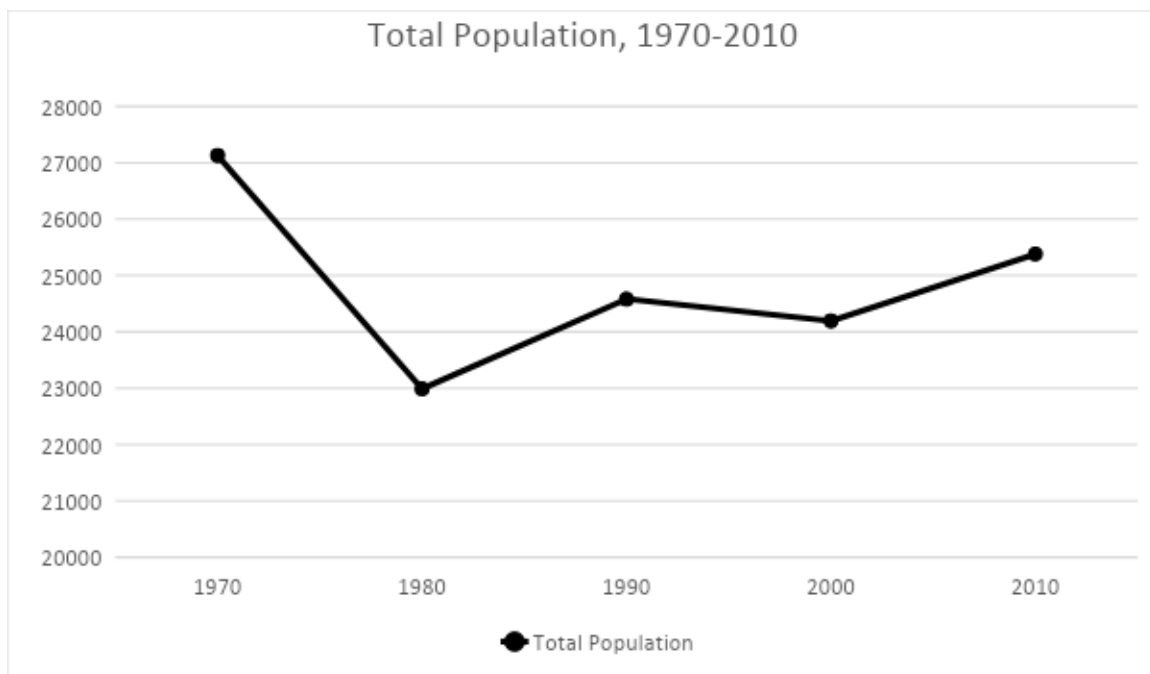
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- Map showing the neighborhood of Columbia Heights divided into its six Census tracts.
- Blocks between Sherman Ave. NW and 11th St NW are not included and are part of other Census tracts.

Race/Ethnicity



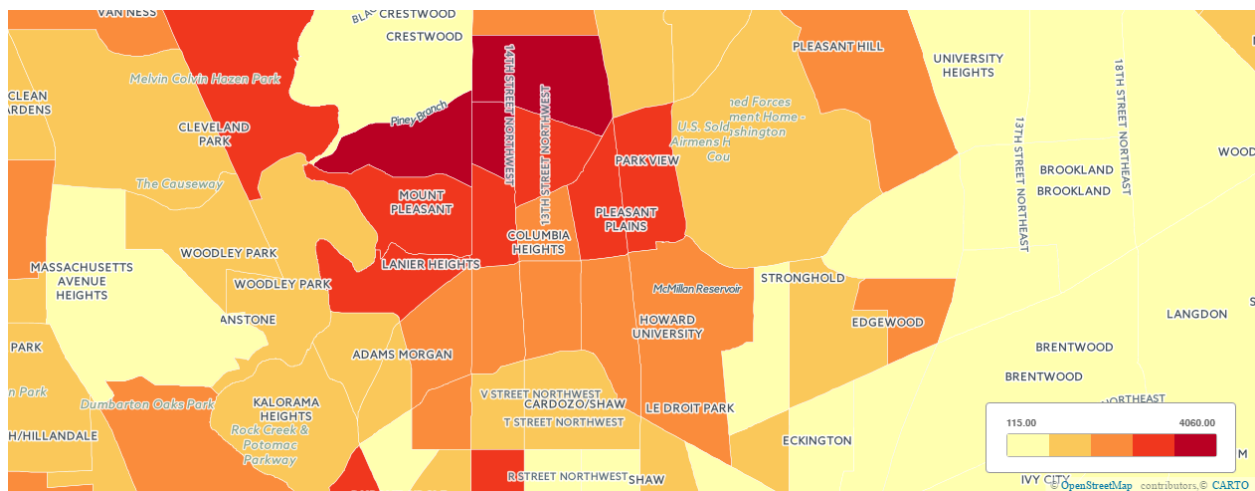
- This graph shows the racial/ethnic composition of Columbia Heights from the 1970 Census to the 2010 Census. It uses the 3 largest groups: Black, Hispanic, and White.
- There are currently and have historically been groups of people identifying as Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or other race; however, the numbers are significantly smaller.
- The graph shows that as the Hispanic and White populations have grown the Black population has declined.
- The White population started growing once the Hispanic population started growing which demonstrates as discussed in class that White people are more likely to move to areas with large concentrations of Hispanics as opposed to Blacks.
- As of the last Census, the Hispanic population has started to see a decline as well while the White population continues to grow - this possibly points to the effects of gentrification.
- The graph also includes data for the foreign-born population which has a fairly strong correlation with the Hispanic population meaning the majority of foreigners moving into the city were Hispanic immigrants/migrants.



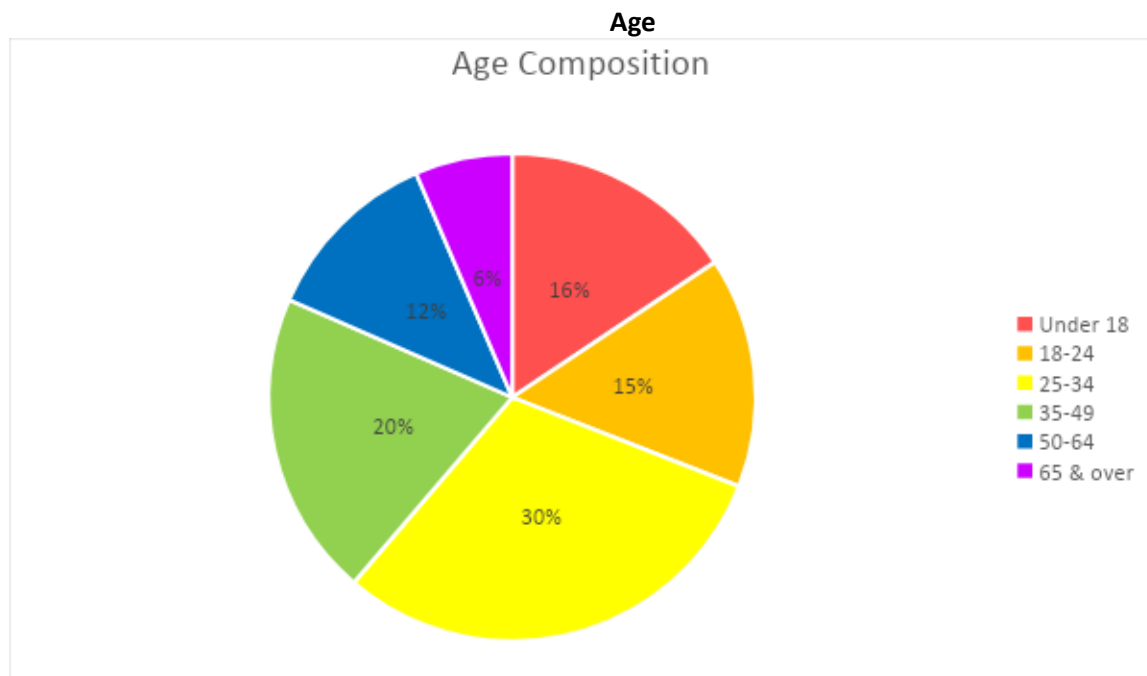
This

graph shows the total population of Columbia Heights at each Census from 1970-2010.

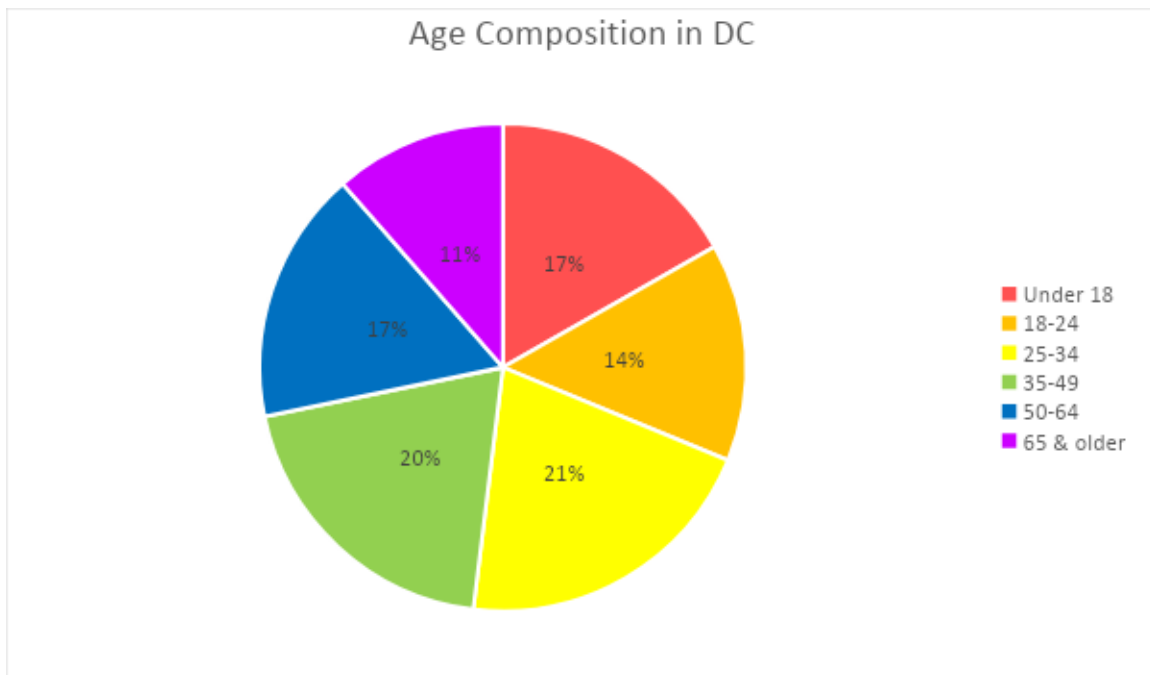
- There was a significant population decrease between 1970 and 1980 likely due to people leaving the deteriorating neighborhood in the aftermath of the 1968 riots.
- There was a sharp population increase between 1980 and 1990, which is when the Hispanic and foreign populations saw the largest increases likely due to immigration reform as well as civil wars and coups taking place in Central America.
- The population mostly leveled between 1990 and 2000, which is when the Hispanic and foreign population saw levelling as well.
- The population saw an increase between 2000 and 2010. The Columbia Heights station opened late in 1999 and DC USA in 2008. The white population saw its largest increase in this time frame as well. Gentrification?
- Census Tract 28.02 saw significant population loss in the last Census, while the other tracts saw increases or steadied. Likely due to revitalization going on in the tract (i.e. Metro station, DC USA).



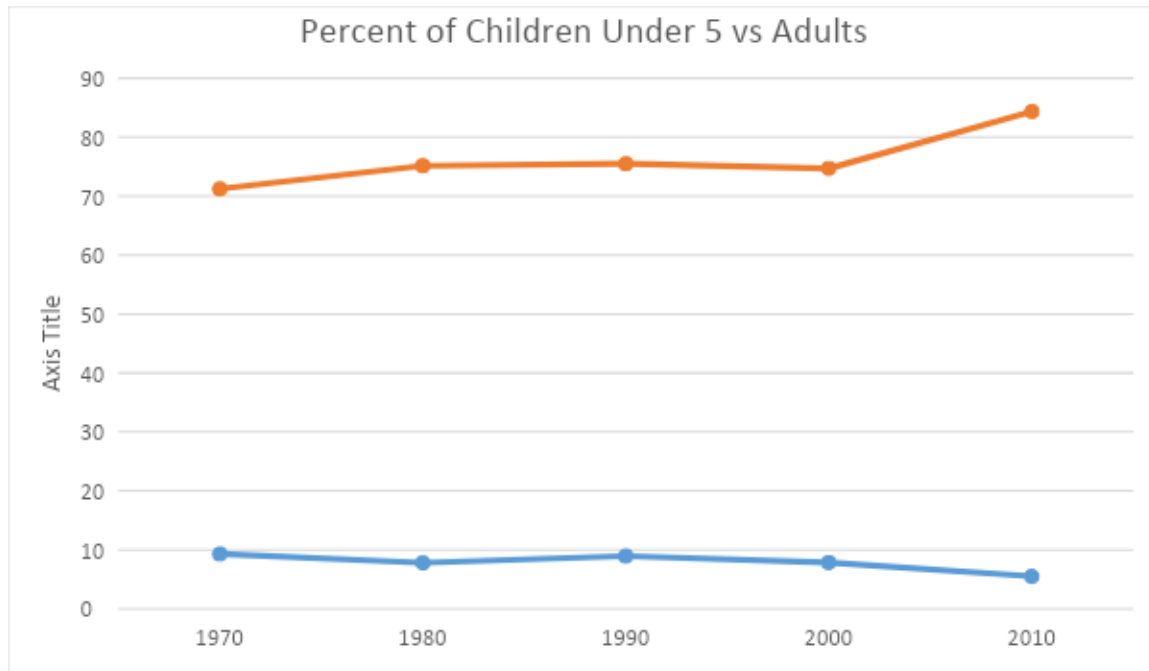
- Map showing the number of adults in each Census tract that speak Spanish.
- Appears fairly even throughout the city - although there is actually closer resemblance to Columbia Heights' numbers on across 16th St than in neighborhoods to the East (which have higher Black populations).
- 13.75% of adults in Columbia Heights speak Spanish, while the percent of Hispanics is around 30%. People under 18 must make up a large portion of Hispanic population?



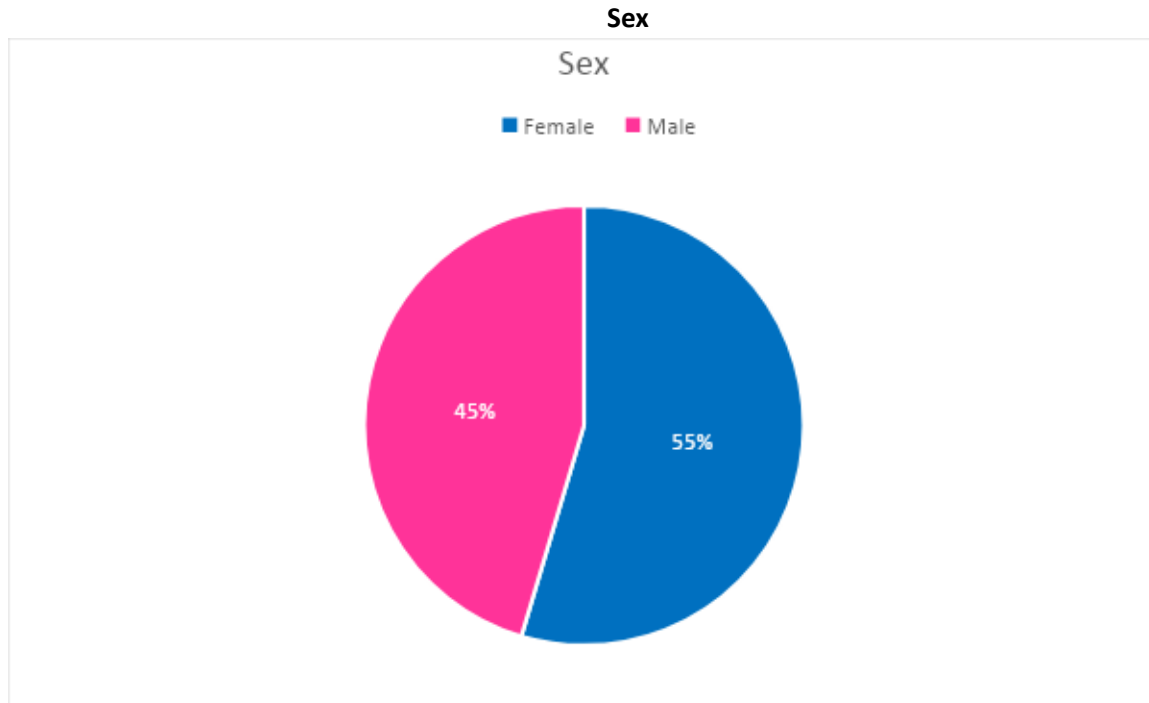
- Percent of millennials, people in the 25-34 age group is very high and significantly larger than the under 18 and 35-49 age groups. Are families in this once family neighborhood on the decline?



- By comparison, DC's 25-34 age group is a lot smaller and the 50-64 and 65& older groups are larger. Groups are overall more evenly distributed.

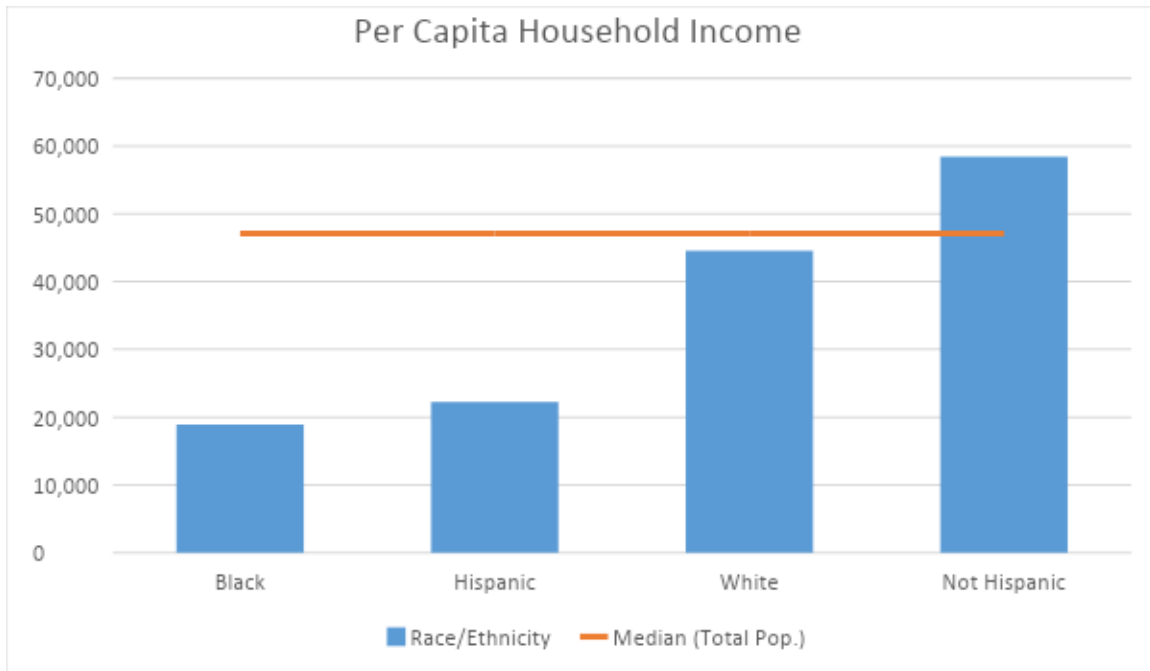


- Graph shows the percent of children vs. percent of adults living in neighborhood from 1970 - 2010.
- Between 2000 and 2010 the population of children fell to 5.5% - after decades of hovering close to 10%. The percent of adults spiked 10% to 84.36% between 2000 and 2010. This could be reflective of young millennials without children, who are not having babies moving into the neighborhood.

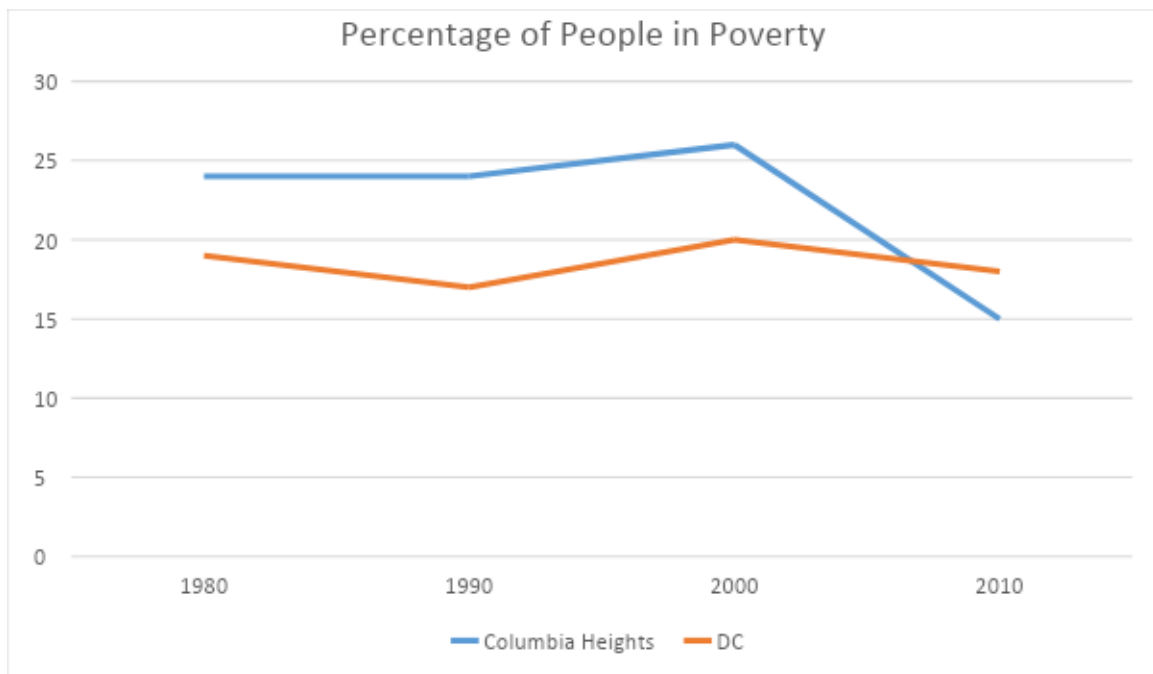


- Pie chart showing the neighborhood's population broken down by the gender marked on the 2010 Census.

Income

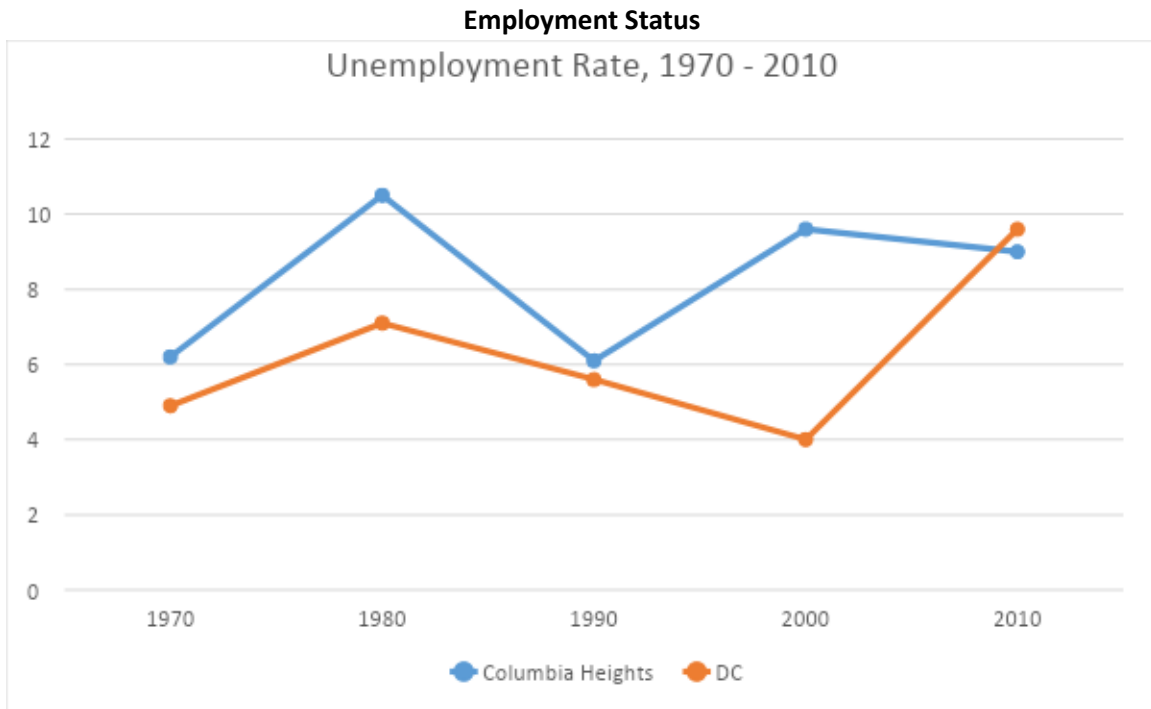


- Graph showing the per capita income by race/ethnicity and the media for the neighborhood population.
- Blacks and Hispanics are significantly below the media.
- Whites are within a couple \$1,000 of the median.
- Non-Hispanics do exceedingly better than Hispanics and surpass the median line.

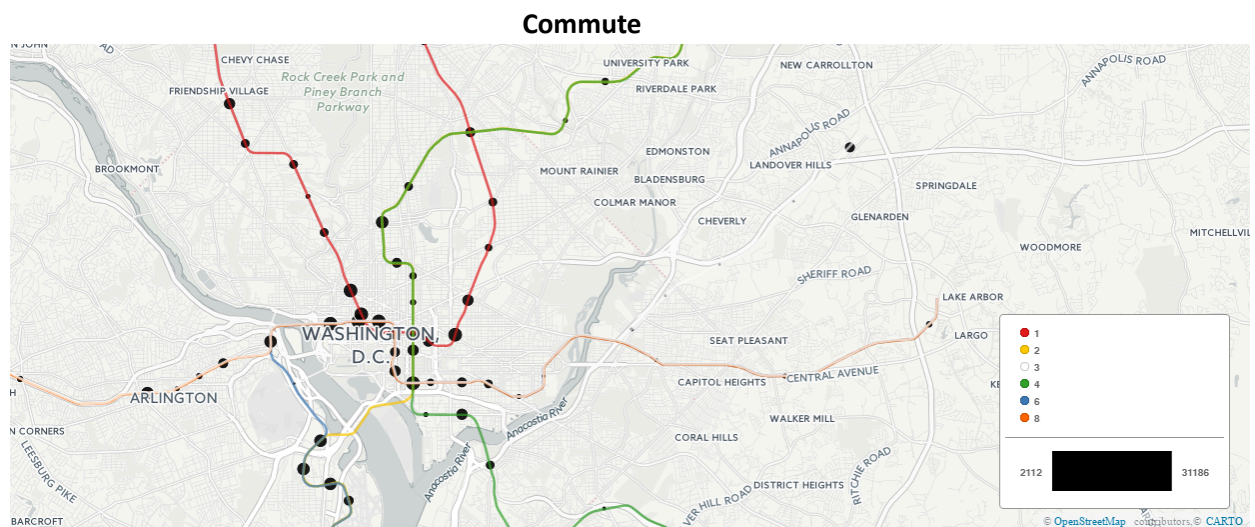


- Graph illustrating the percentage of people in poverty from 1970-2010.
- Columbia Height's rate was stable until 2010, when it dropped more than 10% and dropped below DCs rate, which it had always been above.

- Data is based on neighborhood cluster which includes Mt. Pleasant, Pleasant Plains, and Park View. Data gathered from Neighborhood Info.

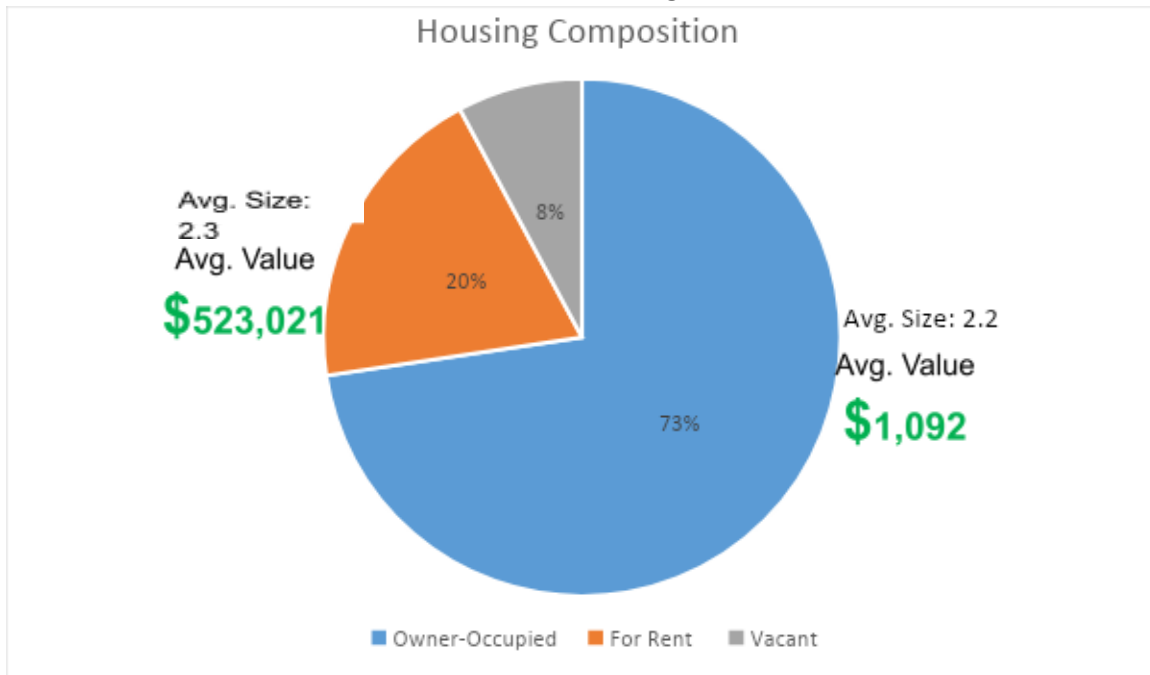


- Unemployment rate in Columbia Heights has gone up and down, but has been consistent with the ups and downs of the overall DC unemployment rate - except for the last Census, when it went down slightly, while D.C.'s went up significantly. Is gentrification responsible?
- Data from Bureau of Labor Statistics

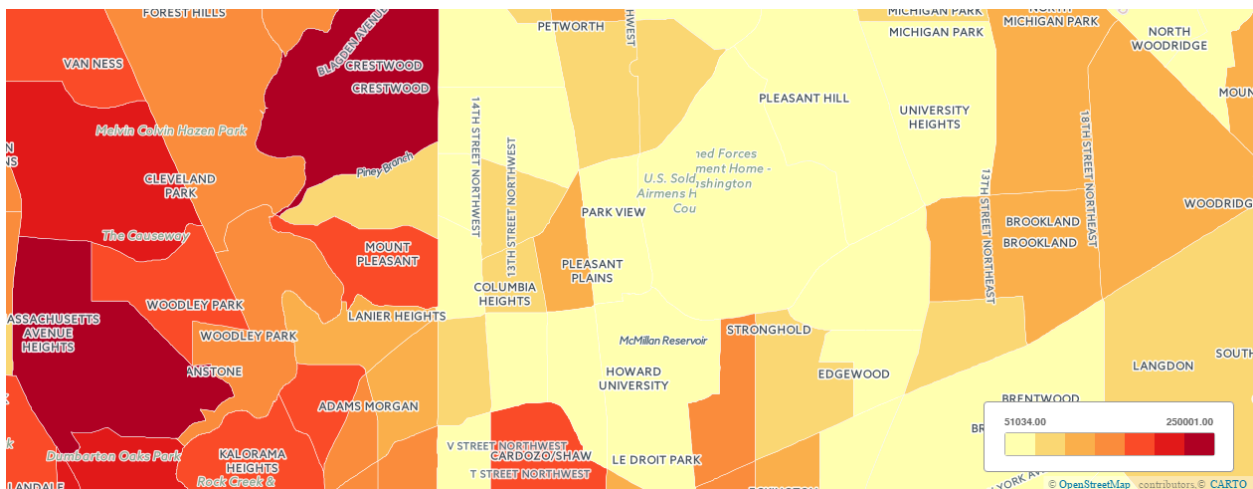


- Map showing the lines and metro station daily ridership of the DC Metro system.
- With more than 12,500 daily riders, Columbia Heights is 3rd to L'Enfant Plaza and Chinatown in ridership (these two are transfer stations).
- Metro station opened in 1999.

Housing

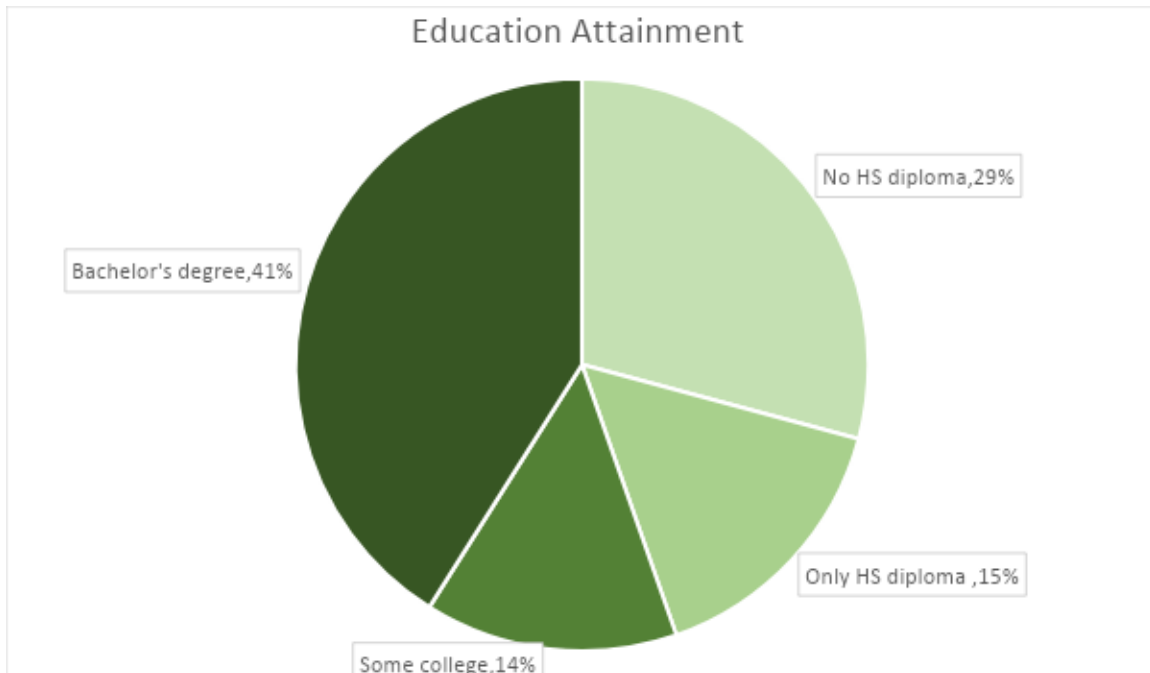


- Pie chart showing the housing composition of the neighborhood.
- A majority of occupied homes (4 in 5) are rented. By comparison, on average, only 3 in 5 in DC are rented.
- 1 in 12 homes are vacated.
- The average number of people living in owner occupied homes is slightly larger than the average number of people living in renter occupied homes.
- The average number of people occupying homes is slightly over 2 – are families in decline?
- 20% (1 in 5) homes have a minor living in them – the rest don't.
- 1,085 people unaccounted for in housing.

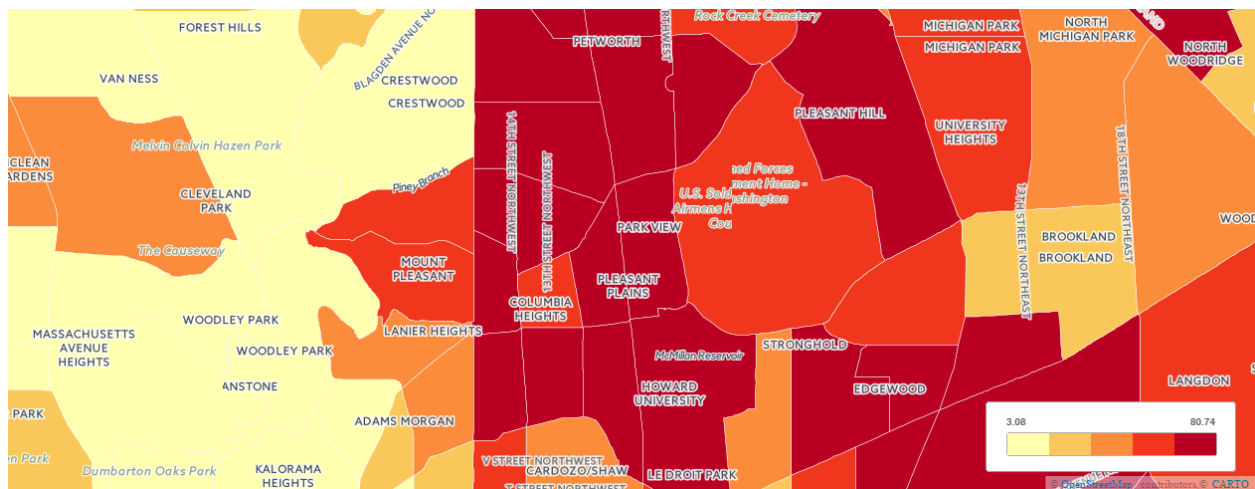


- Map showing media household values per Census tract.
- Homes West of the 16th Street clearly have higher values than those East of 16th Street.

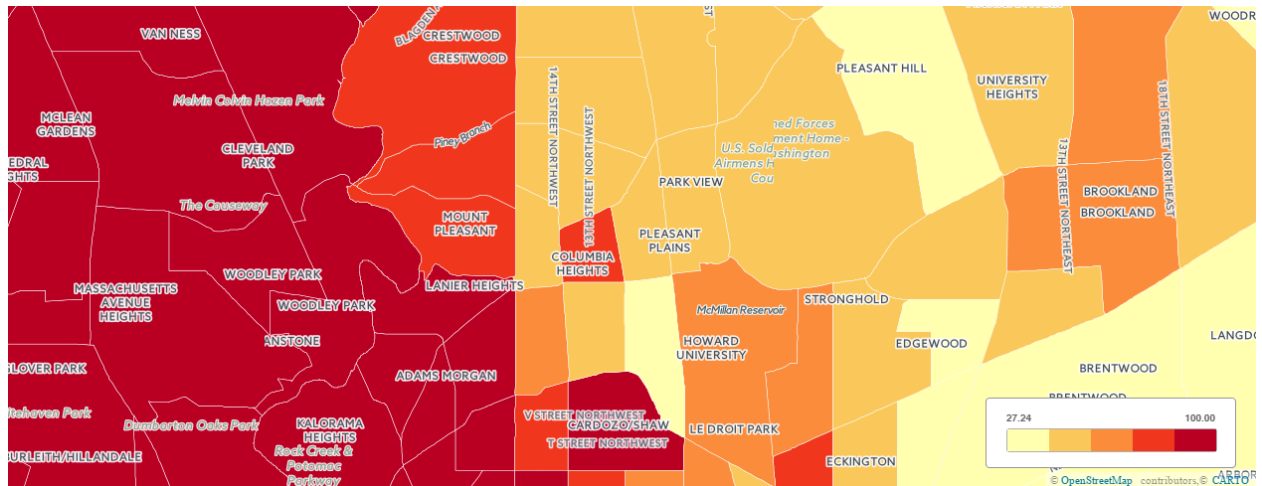
Education Attainment



- Pie chart showing the education attainment of Columbia Heights residents over the age of 25.
- Less than half of all residents have at least a Bachelor's degree.
- Nearly half have only a HS education or less than.

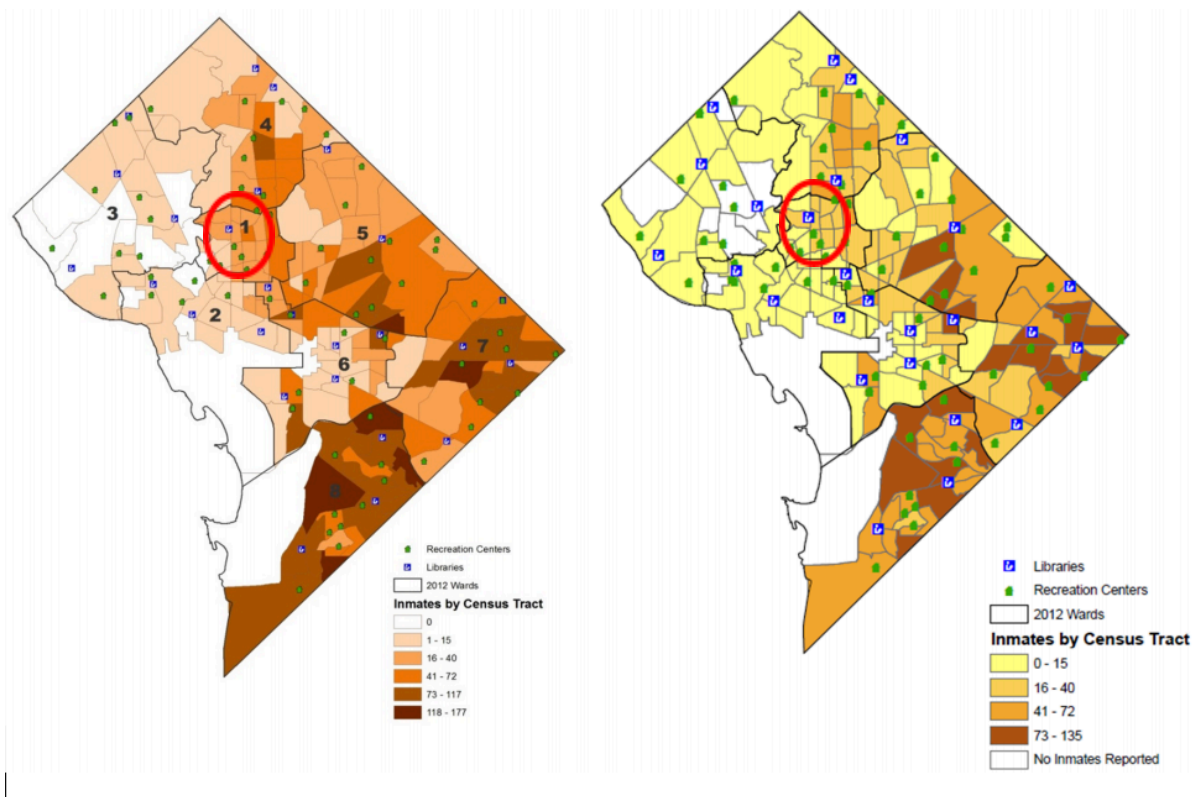


- Map showing the percentage of the population over 25 in various census tracts with no HS diploma.
- The neighborhood of Columbia Heights is filled in the two darkest shades.
- All neighborhoods immediately West of Columbia Heights and 16th Street are doing exceptionally better. Neighborhoods on the East are doing similarly. Sign of segregation.
- Census Tract 30 is doing slightly better than the surrounding tracts. It contains the most redeveloped/gentrified areas of the neighborhood; location of Metro station.



- Map showing the percentage of the population over 25 in various census tracts with a Bachelor's.
- The neighborhood of Columbia Heights is filled in with some of the lightest shades.
- All neighborhoods immediately West of Columbia Heights and 16th Street are doing exceptionally better. Neighborhoods on the East are doing similarly. Sign of segregation.
- Census Tract 30 is doing slightly better than the surrounding tracts. It contains the most redeveloped/gentrified areas of the neighborhood; location of Metro station.

Incarceration



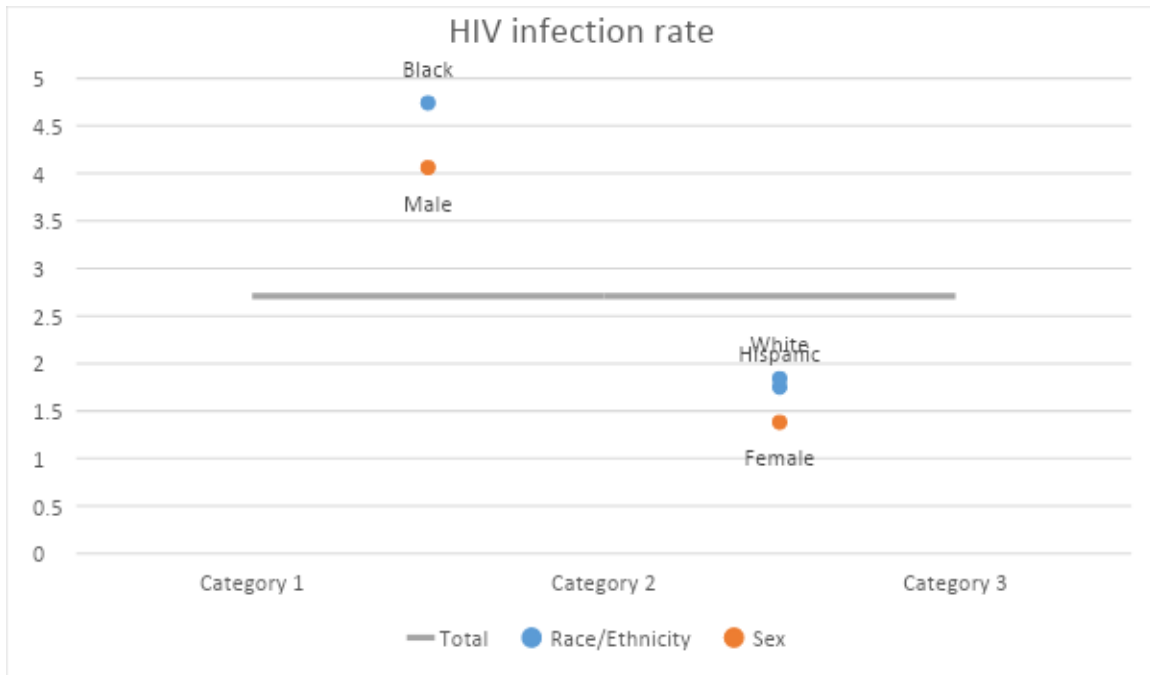
- Map of Census tracts showing number of incarcerations occurring in the 1st and 2nd half of 2014. Columbia Heights is circled in red.
- Areas on the Western side of DC have fewer incarcerations than do those on the East.
- Figures and map found on Department of Corrections, District of Columbia website.

Crime Rates

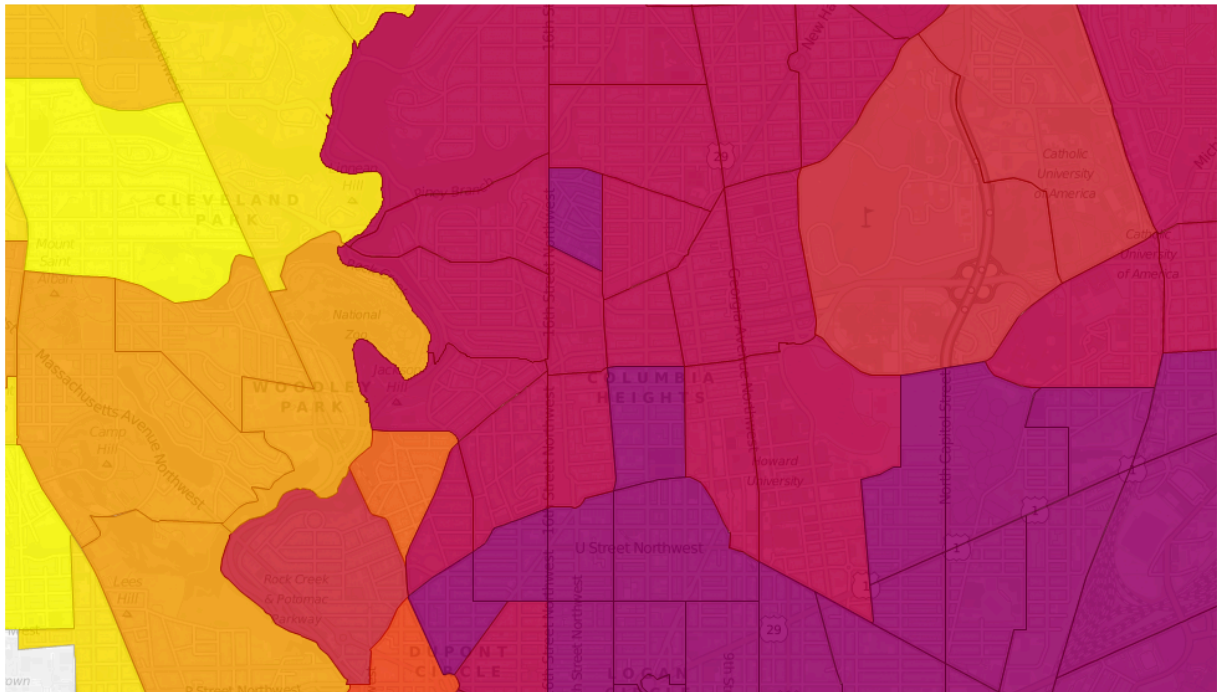
Crime	Total	DC Total
Homicide	3	113
Sex Abuse	11	293
Robbery (with gun)	96	1501
Robbery (without gun)	44	1088
Assault with Deadly Weapon (with gun)	53	1331
Assault with Deadly Weapon (without gun)	19	660
Burglary	66	1811
Theft	641	11821
Auto Theft	408	8738
Stolen Auto	66	2112
Arson	0	5

- Chart comparing the number of crimes that occurred in Columbia Heights and in DC from 01/01/2016 to 11/02/2016.
- Most thefts, 316, occurred in the immediate periphery of the Columbia Heights Metro station. Commuters or visitors with little knowledge of the area are targeted?
- Data collected from the Metropolitan Police Department.
- Will be collecting data from 2008 to compare.

HIV/AIDS



- Scatter plot showing HIV rates by race/ethnic group and sex.
- Blacks and Males are significantly above the line. HIV prevalence has historically been higher in these two demographic groups because HIV is higher among men who have sex with men and the down low mentality exhibited by many black gay men.
- In Columbia Heights, HIV rate among Hispanics and Whites was basically the same (rate among Whites was slightly more). In DC, as a whole it was more than double – 16% of the infected were White, while 7% were Hispanic.



Washington, DC - Census Tracts - Rates of Persons Living with Diagnosed HIV, 2013

AIDS*Vu*



DATA NOT SHOWN * ☐

DATA NOT AVAILABLE ** ☐

*Data not shown to protect privacy because of a small number of cases and/or a small population.

**Data not available.

Rates displayed are the number of cases per 100,000 people.

NOTE: Data represent persons living with diagnosed HIV or AIDS in Washington, DC at the end of 2013 and who were diagnosed and reported as of 12/31/2015. Cases are based on residence at diagnosis. Data have not been adjusted for reporting delays. See Data Methods for more information.

- Map showing HIV rates by Census tract. Clear differences between those East and West of 16th St.
- Map and data from AIDS*Vu*.org. Rates as of 2013.

INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW 1

African-American male in his 40s who previously lived in Columbia Heights

African-American female in her 20s who previously lived in Columbia Heights

Do y'all live in DC?

Female: Not anymore

So you lived here before?

Female: Yes.

How long ago and for how long?

Male: A couple months.

Female: Like a couple months for like a year.

Before living in Columbia Heights, where did y'all live?

Female: I'm from here, so I grew up in Bloomingdale. It's right up the road.

Male: I actually lived in Columbia Heights for about 8 years. Prior to that I lived in California and I moved here after college.

When you moved to Columbia Heights what was your decision process in moving here?

Female: I think I wanted it to be the culture cause it used to be that way. For me, I was doing a friend a favor by subletting and the rent was very cheap where I was. But I will say I wanted it to be the culture and that's what drove me to Columbia Heights, but it's different now. I noticed that after moving in, so that's why I cut it short.

Definitely. That's actually what I was going to get to cause I know that Columbia Heights is gentrifying and there's a lot of change happening. Could you touch on that? What have you noticed change?

Female: It started in 2004 I think. So it's something I'm used to. What I noticed is that traffic, parking has gone up exceptionally. Same with the rent. Condo prices are out of control. I see less color - faces of color. I mean I see the same Mt. Pleasant/Columbia Heights people that I grew up with I guess, but you don't see the community as much anymore. New restaurants, it's more expensive. I don't know. I think just typical gentrified neighborhood things.

Male: Black community definitely for sure. It used to be that the Target and what not was an empty lot, pretty much for a long time. Along that strip of Park Road was certain stores like mom and pop stores that existed right there prior to all that coming up there. That's sort of the time I lived in Columbia Heights. Despite the amenities that there are now you can still have a strong sense of community and a

strong sense of neighborhood - true neighborhood. There are just fewer and fewer parts of Columbia Heights that are like that. You can still sort of get a sense of what things were passing Newton Street. North of the gas station on 14th, that little strip.

Female: I think once you pass Park and 14th you get that old Columbia Heights. And once you're on Columbia going towards Mt. Pleasant you still get that neighborhood vibe. But Irving Street is like this epicenter of cluster. All the big stores are there. It's just different.

So you'd say that cluster there is mainly people from outside the neighborhood?

Male: For sure. I think if it was just outside the neighborhood that'd be one thing, but it's outside the city period. That goes for further outside the city, i.e. another state, as well as suburban dwellers that's been out there and maybe commuted to the city for work. That demographic are moving in that are just as foreign as outsiders.

Female: And I think you get a lot people who come to the neighborhood for the culture, but don't include that culture that already exists. So it gets wiped out. It's the nicest I can put it.

Where would you that culture and sense of community exists in D.C., if it still exists?

Female: I think we go to each other cause we all have had really similar circumstances living in D.C. The best we can do is comic relief, like joking about it, with other people who are from here or aren't from here. Like that's where you kind of keep it alive. Letting it be known that it is a problem. That gentrification is happening at a rapid rate. But I don't know I guess it's not here. I guess you have to go...where I'm from a lot of people that were displaced in my neighborhood just moved to Maryland. They still work in the city, but now they commute like 45 minutes. Plus a bus to get home. So I might see them, someone I'm not that close with, they might work in the same industry as I do and we can chat about it, but you don't...DC is so small, so we all keep in touch. There's that. But you don't really have many outlets besides doing something about it or speaking to it.

Male: I think to piggyback on that you have to create it and it's created by the people that you consciously make a decision to be around and engage. She's grown out there, I've been here going on 16 years now, it's something that you take with you if it's inherently you. Like minds come together and in those moments that culture feels like it's tangible, that you can naturally strive for and achieve, based on the people around, more so than this block or that block or neighborhood. We can talk about this in 5 more years and those neighborhoods might still exist as far as the culture being there won't be there, but those individuals surely will. So it stays alive that way as opposed to a geographic location. It sort of dwells on individuals that know better.

Female: What is it called? Like a feudal society, where you talk about things and there's no written history. That's kind of how it is. We need to talk about it as if it's a memory cause it is almost. It's really weird. With it there's still a lot of nice. I always say people don't come here with the intent to purposely be negative or take away things. We can find the good in everything, but drastic change just happens so quickly. Things are getting taller and tighter together so fast.

Male: Just like that. *points at white man practicing fishing cast in middle of field* You didn't see stuff like that back in the day. Well, I don't want to say back in the day cause it almost gives like a longer connotation to what I'm saying. We're talking about 5 years, 10 years ago. It wasn't really that long ago

in the grand scheme of things. Obama's been in office 8 years, almost a decade. At the beginning of his term for example it was different than it is now. Just as in another 4 years it'll be different.

Female: Don't talk about it.

Male: Sorry to bring that up.

Touching on the fisher, do you see much interaction between the different communities that moved in and those that have already been there?

Female: Yeah I think you see it, but it's rare. I think Mt. Pleasant is the best example of it. That's where. In the building I lived in Columbia Heights, they tried to do include people who have maybe been in the building for 30 plus years with these new people, these new faces that are coming in. But you can't find it in every neighborhood. I really do love the neighborhood I grew up in, I just moved back there, but it's frustrating for me to see that in the 90s we had block parties and everyone would reach out to everybody. You would see kids with flyers asking for donations, asking for everybody to contribute. Now it's like the new neighborhood versus Old D.C. You don't see this outreach. It's the same thing when coming from this culture. You're kind of afraid....instead of taking over, put yourself...be a part of it. I say Mt. Pleasant's the best because it's always been such a diverse neighborhood. The white faces you see there have lived there forever. Everyone's just been there for so long, so I just haven't seen much change. They still have Mt. Pleasant Day kind of. But Adams Morgan, for example, they have an Adams Morgan Day. That is completely different. I can't explain the interaction because it's so different. Even Howard kids. I went to Howard and they would prefer to refer to us as locals. There was not a lot of involvement or interaction. That's what you come to school for, that's what they tell you. But then they're like, be careful.

Male: I think it's a lack of purpose made into action. People sort of take them as they came. It's crazy that you look at me like I'm weird cause I said hello, but that happens. That happens walking the street. It's definitely based on lack of interaction, more so the vibe becomes sort of weird and forced. It's almost like people don't want to deal with each other. As opposed to not seeing each other. It's like I'm going out of my way to pretend that this doesn't happen. So I'm gonna look this way when I'm walking down the street and the whole fucking time I've been making eye contact till I get there and all of sudden...

Female: It's like this tension. There's just tension because of all this divide people feel. Even people who aren't from the city they feel what's going on if they're not hearing it all the time or haven't heard it before...it's like energy you feel.

Male: Do you know the history of this park?

I've read a bit on it, but I'd love to hear your perspective.

Male: It's another example of the clear divide people don't notice. So a lot of people would call this Meridian Park. But this park is known locally as Malcolm X Park. This park is known as Malcolm X Park, because there was a petition put into have this park changed, to have this park name changed that was denied in I believe the 60s or the 70s...by Angela Davis I believe. The petition was denied, but locals called the park Malcolm X Park.

Female: It's only here, the non-blacks that call it Meridian Park.

Male: So just the name of the park and hearing people say Meridian Park and not Malcolm X Park, that's a physical manifestation in front of us in the simplest form, but it touches on the larger picture....I think people are just so in their heads about what that person's thinking. What are you getting? What are you thinking? What are you feeling? You're worried about they're not too friendly or that person thinks I'm xyz, because you have your own preconceived notions about them. But you choose to reflect as if they are somehow judging you.

Female: You notices the lack of eye contact and everyone's focusing on what you're wearing, what your hair color is, what your skin looks like. No one makes eye contact, so you can't make those interactions with people. That's part of consumer culture. It's like there's no need to make eye contact to see how anyone is put together.

I don't necessarily have an answer to this myself and it's a bit of a loaded question, but if there were to be a solution, what do you think it would be?

Female: I don't know. We talk about this in class all the time. I think trying harder to interact and be together. Make art together, talk to each other, go to concerts together. Just interact. Don't be such a freak. Treat everybody like a human. Keep that interaction going. Help someone out. Don't just walk past homeless people. They're people. They're not trying to assault you. Just be a good person. It's hard, not to be a good person, but to remember that you have responsibilities to your humanity. We forget cause we work all the time, spend money all the time, cause we have to, we're stressed. It feels good for your ego to do something good, so if that's how you begin, by nursing your ego then start with that. Just do something for somebody else that's outside of your normal comfort zone.

Male: Even if it's just to say hi. That's where it starts. You gotta start somewhere. The only way you can be enlightened by someone else or anything is being receptive to that enlightenment or words of wisdom. Applying it if applicable, if not you keep it moving, but you had a genuine interaction with someone and you are better for having had that interaction. I think people wear themselves out by doing too much, by thinking too much - which is all a part of doing too much. It's no sweat of your back to say things...My beliefs, my fears trump everything else. That's why people are so easily manipulated when it comes to fear. It's not putting yourself out in the sense of somehow you're gonna be making yourself vulnerable for hurt or whatever. Putting yourself out there in that sense is never possible if you don't make it so. Nobody is saying make yourself vulnerable to be taken advantage of in anyway. Extending a hand or a thought or a comment or a look can make somebody's day.

INTERVIEW 2

Latino male in 30s who has lived in Columbia Heights for 6 years

Do you live here in Columbia Heights?

Yes.

How long have you been living here?

6 years.

Where did you immigrate from?

Mexico.

Did you move straight to Columbia Heights or did you live in another neighborhood?

I moved here.

Coming from Mexico to D.C., what perceptions did you have about D.C.?

Well, since one comes here without really knowing much, one's learns from the culture here. I didn't know much about Columbia Heights prior to moving here. I have seen changes in parts where there was lots of drug trafficking, but I see it getting better now. I've also seen that the city is generally more tranquil in comparison to other states like say Maryland in Towson and Wheaton. You could so those are pretty dangerous at night. Not here. Here it's safe. I like it. There's lots of security and you can walk around at night, of course not every night, but you can be calm.

What do you think those changes in the amount of crime are due to?

Before, from what I've heard, there were a lot of drug addicts. I feel like that's under control now and there's been a cleansing of sorts. There's a lot of police involvement. I think the citizens...or well everyone I should say...I don't think there's preference...the majority have united to make a safer D.C. If there's unity, regardless of culture, race, religion, regardless of where you come from, if we're all united to have a safer state things are good that way.

Do you think that unity exists here?

Very little. You have to start somewhere. Sure, everyone has different ways of thinking, acting, and of viewing things. However, there's a point in which we all need each other. If we don't support each other....it shouldn't matter the difference. If we want to live well I think it's important to unite.

In Columbia Heights, specifically, you see a mix of multiple groups (i.e. Blacks, Latinos, and Whites), what can you say about the interactions between those groups?

Well, in my point of view, I know that the Latinos and the American, we have racist attitudes towards Black people. In, part because of their behavior. Not all, but the thing is we base our perceptions of a group off one person. For example, if someone from Mexico is a rapist, they say we're all rapists. There's lots of murder in El Salvador, we're all murderers all of a sudden. Here, it's said Americans smoke lots of marijuana then suddenly they're all the same. So yeah, there's always the fact that people think differently and when one person does something bad the whole group gets a bad rep. I think we're all a bit racist. There are people who have had bad experiences. For example, I was here a few months ago and some black youngsters threw nuts at me. It's the way in which they have fun, but they don't notice they're hurting other people. I was here with another friend when that happened and that made him have even more dislike for them. One person can ruin it for the whole group.

As a Latino, what opportunities have been offered to you here in Columbia Heights?

I think this country is filled with many opportunities. I don't think it matters where you're from. The thing is it all depends on the choices you make. Your choices will make or break you. There are many opportunities for people here and if you don't take advantage of them early on it's hard to come back from that. This is a country you have to take advantage of. There are so many freedoms here and that's why I like it so much. Mexico is also like this, but the downfall is that there are so many Mexicans who don't like to read, they don't like to do things differently.

You said you came here not knowing many people, so in the past 6 years how have you formed a community for yourself?

At work. I think talking to people to. If you don't smile at people they're not going to talk to you. They continue on their path. A while back I was hanging out with a friend. I smiled at someone and my friend reprimanded me cause he thinks people won't be receptive. I thank God for those people he has put in my path.

INTERVIEW 3

36 year-old Latino male who along with twin brother owns a restaurant in Columbia Heights

Were you born here or in Dominican Republic?

Mom and Dad arrived from DR in 1980. We were born here in '85.

Have you always lived in Columbia Heights?

We lived in D.C. until we were 5 and this area was pretty dangerous back then. So, mom and dad moved us out to Maryland when we were 5. At 10, in '95, my parents bought this business here and so we did spend a lot of time here. We didn't live here, but were always in this environment.

Why did they choose to open up the business in Columbia Heights?

In '95, there wasn't much competition in relation to Hispanic groceries. Say you wanted to buy plantains, you had to go far out to get them. So dad decided to put up a grocery with a butcher and everything. So it was really about the space. There wasn't much competition for that.

So was the store housed here or was it separate from the restaurant?

Well, it started off as the grocery, but with time...mom would cook for us on the weekends and clients took note of her food and they basically wanted to buy what she was making straight from the pot. From there, I don't know if you've been to New York, but up there are tons of bodegas that have kitchens in the back. So, that is what Los Hermanos was for a long time up until 7 years ago. Then we decided to just sell food after the area was redeveloped. They brought over the Target, the Giant. They brought over markets that sell Hispanic products: El Progreso, Bestway.

What has all the redevelopment meant for the business?

The good thing is that...when my dad bought this property the neighborhood was in bad shape. You'd walk this street and there were drugs, prostitution, crime. So, before my dad bought the property he went to the Planning Office and he saw that the metro was going to pass right through here, just a couple blocks away. So, he knew that one day the business would be fruitful. After the metro and the other businesses were brought over, the area was basically cleaned. People felt a lot more comfortable and safe. There was a lot more foot traffic and that really made our revenue go up, because people were feeling much safer. In terms of competition, dad said that what sells is competition. Next door, a Cuban restaurant opened up. People thought that opening up the Cuban restaurant would drive our revenue down, because it's direct competition. But to the contrary, our revenue actually went up. What happens is people who come to specifically eat that food are going to someday want variety and they'll come here. Vice versa too. People who come here go there often. So the competition brings more people here and it's better for us.

Besides the economic changes, there's been a clear cultural change as well. There are people of many different backgrounds now living here. Has that helped the business?

Yes. Since our food is fairly universal and there isn't use of spice, really anyone eats it. Before it was just Latinos and Blacks that ate it, but now it's them as well as Whites. This has helped us a lot for sure, the diversity.

Is this business, the space it occupies, is it owned or rented?

My parents bought it. These used to be townhouses before, but my parents bought it and made it the business. If this were rented we would've been out a long time ago. That's what happens in D.C. As soon as the area starts to move up, those who rent get taken out and the area is remodeled and rent is raised. The city in the last 5 years has raised the property tax in order to move us out. Luckily, we've been able to survive that as proprietaries. That's why we're still here. In this area, we're the oldest business really. All the others left. Most of the businesses that are here now...none of them are older than 10 years, besides perhaps one or two.

So when y'all were younger, you said you moved to Maryland, but do you still live there or do you live here to be closer to the business?

We moved around quite a bit actually. At 11 we moved to Dominican Republic. 4 years later we came back and lived in Silver Spring. We finished high school and moved into a place where we had grown up when we were younger. My brother and I moved into the area above the restaurant for 2 years, but then we got married and now we're living in Maryland again. So we've lived in many places, but we always find our way back here since work is here.

The upstairs apartments was that rented or did you also own that space?

Yeah the whole building is ours. We didn't have to pay rent. It was great cause we lived here, we worked here. That way we didn't have to deal with traffic or anything like that. The area was safe. Now that we're married though and have children we can't be pent up in the same place. That's why we left.

With the diversity here, what has happened in Columbia Heights?

The reality is that since they made all the development Whites are the group that is moving in and coming up. That's what you see now. Them walking their dogs, riding their bikes. You didn't see that before. The area with it being so high now you have to pay \$3,000 for a tiny studio. You have to be making much more than \$100,000 or there has to be a couple that together are making those numbers. Low-income people have had to move out to Northeast, to the Maryland suburbs. However, even in Northeast the same thing is happening. The same redevelopment is taking place. People are being dispersed more and more to places like Hyattsville that doesn't charge as much for rent.

Are jobs found easily in those places?

Well, D.C. is a transitional city anyways. People come through here be it for school, an internship, or better jobs. So D.C. will always be that way in comparison to suburbs.

Would you say that people in Columbia Heights, people of different cultures, interact with each other or do they keep to themselves and people culturally like them more?

For example, people who come to the restaurant, tend to be pretty diverse. I mean of course people stick together with people of the same race, ethnicity, but they also come in pretty diverse groups. In the schools there are people from all over. In offices there are people from all over. So, there's lots of diversity. It's not like before where it was Latinos on one side and Black on another. Now there's a mix for sure and it's really good. At the metro, many people get together.

So the changes are a mixed bag you'd say?

Yes. There has been positive change. The downside is that those who are poor get pushed out, but it's hard to combat that.

INTERVIEW 4

33 year-old White male who has lived in Columbia Heights for 5 years

How long ago did you move to D.C. and why?

7 years ago and for grad school.

What were your perceptions of D.C. before coming here?

Very government focused. Didn't have much culture in terms of food scene and art scene. Kind of like the ugly stepsister to New York. So I was happy to come here, because it was in line with the career that I was attempting to build for myself which is international development which is where my career has gone. So that's why I was drawn to Washington, D.C. cause this is where you find most jobs related to international development with a few exceptions. So that's why I decided to move here and go to school here and grow my professional network, but I don't know that it necessarily fit my personality when I moved here cause I feel like every city has a personality and you have to find a city that matches that personality. I don't think my personality jives directly with D.C. It's a little bit wonky, dorkish. The art scene and the mix of people isn't that prominent or it's just different based on the government, D.C. being the center of our government.

When did you move to Columbia Heights?

2011.

What made you choose Columbia Heights over other neighborhoods?

I think it is more vibrant, more economical, it's easy, quick transportation to get to work. Not stuff I took into consideration at first, but it was an added bonus. It's also closer to where my social network and group of friends is. Made it easy to go to different social venues around town.

Did you have those conceptions about Columbia Heights prior to doing research during moving or did you find that out during research?

Probably. That was what I knew. I came up here a lot for Target, to visit friends. I have a lot of friends who live in Mt. Pleasant. I like Mt. Pleasant a lot and I lived there for a brief time. I was living in Southwest before then. So I don't think my perceptions have changed. I wasn't here before all the development, but I have heard stories about there was nothing there, same with 14th Street. Lots of prostitutes running up and down 14th. It's a completely different world now. So you see the transformation. I think I see a lot of it down away from Columbia Heights. The transformation that happened in Columbia Heights had already taken place by the time I got here. So I've seen some transition but not as great a transition in those years, between 2011 and now. It definitely is being impacted by the real estate boom, more condos. Like I've mentioned to you before, I was bought out of my last place. Buying vacant buildings, buying people out, and making these places luxury apartment buildings. Then there is mixed condos and different people and cultures here.

That mix of cultures here, would you see that those different groups interact or do they just coexist?

I'd say they coexist. I think that's the interesting thing about Columbia Heights, because you have a lot of diversity and different groups. I feel like unless there's a concerted effort by you or a certain medium to connect with people, people just kind of coexist and are floating in the same space. That makes it somewhat of an interesting environment. In some ways, it's a weird juxtaposition. It adds to the character and there are lots of characters and then you do interact with some friendly people, but also rude and disgruntled people as well. It's different. I wanted to say it's almost like people are unfriendly and keep to themselves, but there are those rare gems and rare moments. But those maybe exceptions more so than the norm. Which I find so sad. I question, why live here in this neighborhood? I want to stay in the city at this point and time, but why am I investing in a neighborhood where there are shootings going on, robberies going on, but you're still paying premium prices and people aren't necessarily being nice. My experience with D.C. is that those people are there you just have to go out and find them. In terms of them, meaning maybe people that you can connect with across class, race, or what have you. Regardless of where you come from, you're always looking for people you can connect with and that get you.

What you said kind of answers this a bit, it's a bit of a loaded question, but what do you think would be a solution to both the integration problem and the displacement?

It's challenging. I think it comes down to education. After living here I've realized that you have to be very mindful of how you interact with people. I used to drive and used to honk. You can be very flippant with people, but some people based on their background or where they're coming from don't have a lot to lose and can pull a gun on you. You just don't know how people are going to react. I think you need to recognize where people are coming from. I'll say people are acting that way because of their education. I'm saying this because I've had certain circumstances where...thankfully I've never been shot at or been robbed, knock on wood nothing ever happens. But I've had certain instances with interactions with people where it's like you need to add more sugar and less vinegar, because you don't know how they're going to react and I think it comes down to education, background, and where they're coming from. Also, I feel like yes there are issues of race and racism and structural racism that have existed in D.C. which have created...I don't know the full history of the neighborhood, but I know there were laws created to keep African Americans out and once they started moving in before the riots, then the white flight. Now you have a constant influx..I think this is what makes any city challenging, but I think people see it more here and it's the constant influx of young professionals coming in and I even kind of make up that population even though I've been here for quite some time and I've seen people come and go. Nothing is static or stagnant. That's why I think development is not necessarily a bad thing. You can strive

to make it more inclusive, but at the same time you have to crack down on things that have become normal like shootings, littering. Things that are deemed acceptable in this neighborhood whereas if it were to happen in the Palisades or Georgetown it would be an outrage. I think people just start to see this as temporary. It's challenging. People are invested, but then they're not. You just become numb to what's going on around you. It becomes the new norm. Whether it's structural racism or the structure of crime or violence. It leads to this kind of defeatism of I as an individual can't stop this. There's this article I should find on the Prince of Petworth that caused a lot of stir about the people who lived here. People who lived here and invited a lot in this neighborhood and moved out to the suburbs. It was because of a lot of things that had happened to them after trying to invest in the neighborhood and they had been threatened because they called the police on someone about something and then they started targeting their home. That's the whole mindfulness, so you're dealing in some ways with a lot of highly volatile people. You need to be careful on those interactions and how you go about it. I think that's the thing, do you stay and fight within the system or outside the system? To use an analogy about how people interact with government. I think it's a myriad of factors. It sounds terrible to say, but even though people get displaced sometimes it still creates positivity. When you look at 14th Street, you can look at it negatively and say oh this way of life, the grittiness, the ruggedness, maybe there was a barbershop or different types of stores running up 14th ten or twenty years ago. Now it's like a lot different. To me it's nicer and cleaner and things still happen. It's different and it changes and will continue to change. I feel like things are constantly evolving and to expect things to be static is not necessarily correct for lack of a better term. However, then issues of race and class come in and the matter becomes touchy. Therefore, we don't necessarily talk about them and it becomes something about haves and have-nots. So I hesitate to say things because it's very touchy. Also, the whole broken windows effect. People become numb to what's going on around them. Things need to be addressed on a reactive level and also a proactive level. In sure of making sure the neighborhood is clean, streets are swept, trash is taken out. I think people take pride in their neighborhood, but there's almost this defeatism as well. At least I feel that somewhat. Like why invest, why care. You feel like sometimes authorities don't care. It's a collective numbness from police, to citizens, to government. You stop seeing people as people and everyone's just sort of floating around. That's really negative, but it happens. In ways, I can almost see in terms of the neighborhood here, after one of the shootings, you could see the neighborhood erupt in a small race riot. I've seen things similar happen not too long ago in Mt. Pleasant with the Latino community, because a police officer shot a Latino-American. There's this undercurrent, even for me as a white person, of feeling unwelcomed because you're like a colonist. Where I grew up was 99% white, but even if you're white moving in, those who have lived there for generations you're considered an outsider. I think it's about people being territorial. Generally, unless you're in a cosmopolitan city, people don't welcome the outsider or it takes a while for people who have been there a long time regardless of background. I get that here. It's like here come the new wave of interns or idealists. I was there too, but then you get older and you get cynical. How do you cling to hope? How do you cling to that childlike innocence? So you don't become part of what makes places so dark. So yeah there are good things. Sure it commercialism, but you do have a lot of food, you have a Best Buy, a Target, lots of ethnic restaurants from Latino to Asian from a lot of different price points. So I think development is good. It's toughest for people who lived there before or it can be mixed, but I think that's always the case. At the end of the day, the government has to do what's best for long-term development and ease those growing pains as best they can. That's the thing though. Governments don't always attempt to ease those growing pains. You see it at all levels be it local or with NAFTA and large trade agreements. Yes, trade is good, but it leaves a lot of people behind. Long-term you're going to see increased dividends, but what are governments doing to alleviate the displacement of people lost in the shuffle. I think D.C. does do a good job that compared to other cities, in terms of housing, because to think I got a buyout on my last apartment when other places would have been like no we want you out and you don't get any money. So I think D.C. has some of the

strongest tenant rights associations and tenant law and a lot of advocacy and grassroots here that build into that framework of social justice and there's more awareness of issues gentrification and displacement as development happens. And then there's also a lot of welfare, to in ways offset the disproportionately high prices of rent compared to people's wealth. But then I think education still needs to come in. I think a lot of problems are generational. People who have grown up and have learned certain values in this system...you want to have hope and think there are redemptive qualities, but I'm also a realist and know some of those behaviors won't change. I feel like that almost feed into people's poor portrayals of people of color because they see how people are behaving and they attribute that to everyone. While that may be based on some reality or some of the things that you see that doesn't encompass the whole population. I think that's part of the problem with a lot of the movements out there too. I think we need to focus more on our commonalities. Bruce Lee way back when was asked what are you, are you a citizen and he says no I'm human. So even in this interview I've been using different labels and categories. I like this quote that says once you label me you negate me. It's like instead of labeling people within our group or outside of our group you need to just start seeing people as people. You've got to stop letting these labels and boxes define things. You've got to recognize everyone has a story and they have experienced different pain and some more than others obviously particularly within American and present day history. But you have to recognize that every pain is important. See people as human beings and not just their label. But it's hard because that's wrapped up in identity which creates a lot of pride. Also, if you're just talking to the same group your perspectives are not being challenged, but just reinforced. I think that's what we saw in the election with Facebook. It's the error of Facebook. You see only people who think like you. I think that's why college and maybe even workplaces are great. There are such few environments where people interact differently. In college you talk about philosophy, politics, race and class. You can kind of start to work out what you believe, what your world view is, what your belief system is. Whereas when you grow older and get out of those academic environments it's not polite at the dinner table or work to bring up these fundamental conversations. There are some forums you can seek, but then everyone is just shouting at one another and not listening. That's why my mentality is I'm not here to change people's minds. People have come to a particular way of thinking because of their experiences. So it's like if I can just live my life as flawed as that is...I can let people live theirs and I'll just influence the people in my circle.

INTERVIEW 5

46 year old African-American male who grew up in D.C. and has lived in Columbia Heights for 6 years.

Can you tell me what you've seen and how do you see how Columbia Heights has changed over your life?

I would say as far as Columbia Heights, probably the most significant change was the new apartment buildings being built. You know, they're a certain price, and they pretty much priced other people out. Where, uh, they couldn't afford it, but two blocks down, it's pretty much the same Columbia Heights that I knew it to be growing up. I mean, that area now... like I said, like a block down the street, I mean people pay, you know, thousands of dollars to live and you got people that pay \$500 a block down. So that's pretty much where the difference is. So they haven't finished pricing them out yet, or building over that, or however they wanna do it, but that's pretty much what Columbia Heights is in a nutshell right now.

So when you say that it's priced other people out -

Well, it priced pretty much the people who get government assistance, you know, stuff like that, or just can't, you know, cuz everything over there is pretty much condos, or you know, **there's a specific price range where you have to be making a certain amount of money to live there now**. But it's only like one little part, and that's pretty much between Kenyon and Irving. Right? So above that, and beyond that, it's pretty much the same. You know, Columbia Road, pretty much the same. Fairmont, pretty much the same. **You know, just that little area where Target and all that is, that's where the change happened.**

Do you know anyone who got priced out?

Personally, no, I don't. But **you can see it. You know, you can see certain buildings that are empty that weren't before**. I mean, take Cliff and Terrace, or 24th and Clifton, I don't know if they really call that Columbia Heights, but it's about 3 or 4 blocks from there, and that used to be the worst street within this Shaw-Columbia Heights area, and you see what's over there now, it's pretty much condos now. (2:48)

Was there ever a moment that you remember being like, as someone who lived here your whole life, "this isn't the same place anymore?"

Oh yeah, definitely. Being here my whole life, **it's definitely not the same. Just from the people that walk their dog there, walk around at night, I'm sure they wouldn't've, ten years ago. Not that easy anyway. Or not without being a little scared to do that. Now, pretty much, you know, everyone just does it** - without.. I mean, I still hear gunshots late at night. But I guess most people are in their house by that time that really don't have to deal with that.

A lot of people - basically what you're talking about is gentrification. A lot of people think that that's a bad thing. What do you think? The big Target, the nice condos - do you think it's a bad, thing, do you think it's a good thing, do you think it's a mix of both?

I think it's a grey area. I mean, if you wanna raise case, **it's a good thing**. You know, if maybe your mindset is a little different no one would care about it. **But I'd rather have it, you know, if I was to build a family in that area, I'd rather have the riff raff out**. It's as simple as that. But I mean, it doesn't move that fast, it's not easy just to be like, okay, everybody gotta go. Stuff has to happen. If that was the case, I'm sure a lot of the people would be gone by now. Simple as that. I'm positive about that.

The new people or the original people?

The original people. The new people would still be there, because they don't wanna move, you know they're the ones paying for everything. You know, so, but **everyone likes to be safe, they don't like to walk out their house and see ten people sitting there on the corner, I mean even myself being from here, I don't like to see it myself**.

So that's something that you remember, that it felt more dangerous?

Well that's DC, period. You know, that's not just Columbia Heights, that's wherever you go.

You're too young to remember the riots in '68?

Oh yeah. Well, no. I was told about them. I grew up in Shepherd Park, which is way pretty much uptown, upper 16th st, closer to Maryland. I was told about it, but never really, you know, didn't experience none

of it, not at all. I mean, I couldn't really tell you anything about that. I know Mt. Pleasant, that happened over there, I just never really got into it for some reason, I just don't know. That's another generation, not mine.

There's a lot of history in Columbia Heights, do you feel like that's being represented in the area?

Well, Columbia Heights, I don't think so, where I grew up, yes, there's a lot of history up there. Like, they called in the Gold Coast, pretty much means black people with money. So that's pretty much Shepherd Park, Columbia Heights, that area up there. And I know some of that history up there because I grew up there. But back then, like Columbia Heights, I wasn't allowed to go that far, you know. So, a lot of that stuff down there, unless I snuck down there, you know..

What made you move to Columbia Heights?

Well, my sister and I bought a condo there. And uh, it was nice. **You know, up and coming at the time, it was a new building, we moved in, it was pretty much simple as that.** You know, we lived on Capitol Hill, in other places, but you know this seemed fitting for us at the time, close to work, I could walk to work, you know, stuff like that. You're pretty much in the middle of anything, which you know, depending on what you wanna do, it's good for me.

When people think of gentrifiers, they think of young, white, college or going into business people - but technically, you're a gentrifier. You moved in because the rent was cheap, into a really nice building - it's an interesting contrast.

What's something you wish people who are moving into the area now knew before they came here?

Noise. Certain people move in places where, you know, that's been noisy before they got there, now all of a sudden they wanna complain. Especially club wise. Like, you knew before you came here it was gonna be happening, now you wanna call the police and say, well it's too noisy, I wish they would've known that, that's for sure. I mean, **people have a right to go where they wanna go, to live where they wanna live, where they think is safe. I mean, I go where I think I'm safe.** That's pretty much it.

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