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CARNIVAL, PROTEST, AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY: WEST LOUISVILLE AND THE KENTUCKY DERBY FESTIVAL

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CARNIVAL, PROTEST, AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY: WEST LOUISVILLE AND THE KENTUCKY DERBY FESTIVAL

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
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at the University of Kentucky

By

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

CARNIVAL, PROTEST, AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY:
WEST LOUISVILLE AND THE KENTUCKY DERBY FESTIVAL

This dissertation uses "Derby Cruising" in order to open up the tension between African Americans in Louisville and the Kentucky Derby Festival, especially as that tension was manifest in the spaces of West Louisville. The Kentucky Derby Festival has long served as a site of mediation between people of color and official Louisville. Derby Cruising (1998-2005) and protests around the open housing movement (1967) and anti-police violence (2000) are presented as three critical sites where African American expressions of identity, representation, and belonging have been negotiated through the Kentucky Derby Festival at particular historical moments and in particular places in the city. The dissertation assumes the place of these negotiations in the politics of racialization processes. It employs theories of "festival" and "carnival" inspired by the work of Bahktin, Hall, Nurse, and others in order to conceptualize transgression, protest, and community representation and highlights the importance of festival times as a critical opportunity for marginalized populations to assert a political voice, especially within African American communities. The cases are presented with information drawn from interviews with West Louisville residents, community leaders, and other affiliated officials, as well as from newspaper, media and archival sources.

KEYWORDS: Carnival, Protest, Transgression, Community Identity, African American Urban History, Kentucky Derby Festival

Benjamin Louis Blandford
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January 27, 2015
Date

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS…… iii

LIST OF FIGURES viii

LIST OF TABLES viii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

Overview 5

Chapter Preview 9

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMINGS 17

Festival Transgression and Protest 17

Bakhtin 17

Cultural/Political Critiques of Bakhtin 22

Carnival and Transgression 25

Diaspora and Festival 29

Cruising/Parading/Festival 37

Researching Cultural/Political Geographies 43

Place 45

Identity 46

Representation 49

Belonging 51

Summary 54

CHAPTER 3: PROJECT DESIGN 58

Methods Deployed 63

Interviews 63

Media 67

Archives 70

Researcher Positioning 71

Summary 77
CHAPTER 4: THE KENTUCKY DERBY FESTIVAL, WEST LOUISVILLE, AND THE ORIGINS OF DERBY CRUISING 79
The Kentucky Derby 80
The Kentucky Derby Festival (KDF) 83
KDF and West Louisville 89
Origins of Derby Cruising 97
Summary 104
CHAPTER 5: PROTEST AND THE DERBY FESTIVAL PART I - THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA 107
Origins of Louisville's African American community 108
Derby Festival 1967 and The Battle for Open Housing 117
Postscript to the Civil Rights Movement in Louisville 129
CHAPTER 6: PROTEST AND THE DERBY FESTIVAL PART II: PROTEST AND THE POLICE 134
West Louisville and Socio-economic trends 135
Police Violence and Protest 145
The Emergence of Cruising 154
Outcomes 164
CHAPTER 7: THE GOLDEN YEARS OF DERBY CRUISING 169
Derby Cruising Evolves 171
Festival Ownership 181
Transgression 186
Politics and Difference 194
Summary and Conclusions 200
CHAPTER 8: ENDING DERBY CRUISING 203
The Tide Turns 205
Ending Derby Cruising 213

After Cruising 220
Conclusion 223
CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 226
Implications for West Louisville 226
Contributions 232

REFERENCES 240

VITA 262

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Map of the 9th Street Divide 92

Figure 4.2: Map of Derby cruising's origins 99

Figure 6.1: Percent black by census tract, from 1950-2010 143

Figure 6.2: The March Toward Destiny 151

Figure 7.1: Derby cruising in the local newspaper 174

Figure 7.2: The cruising scene in 2002 178

Figure 8.1: *Courier-Journal* cartoon 207

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Demographic breakdown of interview subjects…… 66

Table 6.1: Louisville Segregation Index, 1940-1990…….... 138

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On Saturday May 7, 2005 a young man from Ohio was shot and killed on West Broadway in Louisville, Kentucky. The shooting reportedly resulted from an altercation between two men over a fender-bender that had escalated to deadly violence (Tompkins 2005). The night before on West Broadway, two other shootings had occurred, though fortunately neither had ended fatally. These events, though each individually tragic in its own right, had a collective effect that permanently changed the landscape of the neighborhood and the city. Indeed, these shootings were not represented as isolated events by the local media, but rather they were depicted as evidence of the systemic 'lawlessness' that characterized West Broadway on the first weekend of every May (The Courier-Journal 2005a).

This particular weekend is significant because it marks the culmination of the annual city-wide and two-week long Kentucky Derby Festival. It is the weekend that hundreds of thousands of visitors descend upon the city for the running of the Kentucky Derby horse race. It is the weekend that millions around the world tune in their televisions to watch the race – complete with the surrounding pageantry of wealth and celebrity. For the city of Louisville, this is the most economically and culturally significant weekend every year.

For West Louisville residents, especially those living along West Broadway, this weekend had become dominated by the celebration known as Derby cruising. In the segregated city of Louisville, the West End is largely populated by African American residents, and Derby Cruising had become the annual neighborhood party associated with the Derby Festival. It was called "cruising" because of the slow parade of cars moving up

and down West Broadway. In a sense, Derby cruising could be considered a combination of an informal parade and a street party. It resembled an informal parade in that many of the vehicles used for cruising had elaborate and creative paint jobs, expensive designer rims, and top quality and high volume stereo systems. The large number of vehicles traveling slowly down West Broadway moved in bumper to bumper fashion, allowing for a considerable amount of foot traffic to mingle with one another and the cars' occupants. With such a street party atmosphere, the event also gained popularity in the regional 'hip-hop' community, as aspiring artists and their promoters used the event to pass out demos of their music and spread the word about upcoming events. Catering to the participants were vendors set up all along West Broadway selling everything from food and drinks to clothing and arts and crafts.

Derby cruising had originated in the early 1990s and its popularity had increased throughout the decade; by 2001, cruising was attracting over 150,000 participants each year (Shafer and Edelen 2006). The event centered on West Broadway between 9th Street and 28th Street, with the most popular night of Derby cruising taking place on the night before the running of the Kentucky Derby, which is held on the first Saturday in May. With such a large crowd attending the party, businesses located in the West end that could cater to the party goers profited heavily. Yet, despite the popularity of the event among so many, cruising was never officially sanctioned as a Derby Festival Event. To the contrary, each year the city sponsored alternative events, such as a hip-hop concert in 2001 (Puckett 2001) and a car show in 2004 (Edelen 2004), to try and reduce the number of cruisers on West Broadway – to little effect. As Derby cruising increased in popularity each year, so too did the increasingly vocal opposition from some city residents. Some complained

about the enormous traffic problems caused by the influx of thousands of vehicles into West Louisville. The neighborhood of West Louisville, an area generally defined as west of 9th Street and north of Algonquin Street, and bordered on the north and west by the Ohio River, includes approximately 80,000 residents (Figure 1). Derby cruising brought in well over 100,000 people, with some estimates even approaching several hundred thousand, for the festivities. This led to traffic gridlock, not only on West Broadway, which is the major thoroughfare in the area, but on most of the side streets, as well. Some local residents, especially those who did not participate in cruising, felt that such traffic was a nuisance at best and a considerable safety hazard at worst. Others complained about the 'street party' atmosphere along West Broadway that resulted, according to critics, in the proliferation of alcohol, drugs, and obscene behavior.

Figure 1.1: Louisville Metropolitan area. The West End is generally delineated by 9th Street to the east, Algonquin Pkwy to the south, and the Ohio River to the west and north.

After the tragic events of May 2005, the tide of public sentiment in Louisville turned against Derby cruising. Cruising was repeatedly described in the media as an out-of-control party that could turn violent at any moment. Other concerns included traffic congestion, lewd behavior, and general public safety. The city government seized the moment by formally and permanently banning the annual events. Years removed, now, the banning of Derby cruising remains a contentious issue for many residents of West Louisville. While the larger Kentucky Derby Festival continues each year, the first weekend of May on West Broadway is mostly a dead scene, with the legacy of police road blocks, restricted access, and mandatory transportation permits leaving an indelible impression on the landscape. Cruising still has strong support from those who believe that

the cultural significance of the event is undervalued by many in Louisville - and drowned out by the debate over traffic, violence and other illegal behavior.

Overview

As the opening vignette suggests, Derby cruising was a wildly popular though highly contentious festival event in West Louisville. Cruising existed outside, or perhaps alongside, the mainstream of the official Kentucky Derby Festival, a two-week long city-wide celebration. Whereas the official festival would culminate with the Running of the Kentucky Derby on the evening of the first Saturday in May, cruising continued through that weekend night and into Sunday morning. Cruising had originated in West Louisville by African American youth as a more recent manifestation of a decades old practice of gathering in the streets to cruise, walk, mingle, and/or socialize on Derby weekend. Because of the location of the events in the segregated and economically marginalized neighborhoods of West Louisville, race inevitably became an important factor in defining perceptions of the event, both internally and externally.

The main thrust of this dissertation examines the years of Derby cruising from 1998 to its eventual ending in 2006. During this time frame, Derby cruising grew from a localized endeavor of West Louisville youth to a regional celebration that included large segments of the African American community. This was particularly notable in that it provided an opportunity for West Louisville residents to participate in the city-wide Derby Festival after decades of being left out of the official festivities. Though the Kentucky Derby Festival committee never fully recognized Derby cruising or the accompanying vendor's fair as 'official' events, cooperation and agreements between city officials and

West Louisville community and business leaders resulted in an event that uniquely catered to African Americans in the city. These elements of the West Louisville festivities enabled the community to assert a unique identity within the city and validated their right to celebrate accordingly. In doing so, African American residents were able to create spaces of belonging within the annual Derby festivities as both Louisvillians and *West* Louisvillians.

The acts of asserting a communal identity and creating spaces of belonging are far from homogenous. For many West Louisville leaders, the festivities provided an opportunity to establish family-centered activities and promote local businesses. Sections of West Broadway were closed off from automobile traffic, and organizers set up a vendor's fair featuring food, cultural wares, and live music from black performers. In this way, the leaders tried to promote a 'positive' representation of the West Louisville community to the city at large.

For other segments of the West Louisville community, particularly African American youth, Derby cruising became a time to assert transgressive identities and establish spaces of belonging *in opposition to* the mainstream. Here, too, the location of the festivities *in the streets* of West Louisville provided some cultural cachet and lent an aura of cultural authenticity for those deeply ensconced within hip-hop culture. Derby cruising's location in 'the hood' or 'ghetto' of West Louisville signified the 'realness' of the events within such a hip-hop worldview. This was furthered by music blaring from speakers, modified or 'tricked out' cars, dancing, clothing, and other cultural performances of the revelers. Other cruisers were more direct in their transgressive acts, be it through the public consumption of alcohol, drugs, or various lewd acts.

These dueling themes of subversion and affirmation as they were performed through Derby cruising constitute one of the major foci of this dissertation. Indeed, scholars have noted how these dueling themes are intrinsic to festival performances. Bakthin (1968) described this as the "ambivalent spectacle" of the carnivalesque, whereby that which is held high is brought down, destroyed, and renewed. Falassi (1987) argued how the general function of carnival is to renounce and then to announce culture:

> "Such representation cannot be properly accomplished by reversal behavior or by rites of intensification alone, but only by the simultaneous presence in the same festival of all the basic behavioral modalities of daily social life, all modified – by distortion, inversion, stylization, or disguise – in such a way that they take on an especially meaningful symbolic character" (3).

The themes of subversion and affirmation are deeply implicated in the successes, controversies over, and eventual ending of Derby cruising. While the location of the festivities in the streets of West Louisville made the events more 'real' for some participants, from city officials' perspective this location became a problem. Officials were concerned with traffic gridlock and safety issues associated with the thousands of cars and people that occupied the streets. As the events gained more visibility and inevitably more notoriety in the local media, Derby cruising threatened to subsume the 'official' celebration.

This dissertation argues that the transgressive festival practices of Derby cruisers was an act of claiming space. In one sense, this involved African Americans claiming the spaces of West Louisville and asserting a sense of belonging within the city. In another sense, it involved claiming spaces within the Derby Festival where African Americans could perform unique festival practices as yet ambivalently opposed to and yet a part of the wider city Derby celebration. This did not result, however, in a monolithic

representation of what it meant to be an African American in West Louisville. Varying, and at times competing, interests were expressed.

The second major focus of this dissertation concerns more directly the relationship between festival and organized protest movements. African Americans in Kentucky have long utilized the tactic of nonviolent direct action in the pursuit of equal rights and social justice (Smith 2011). This dissertation examines two flashpoints of protests that were organized by African Americans in West Louisville and leveraged the heightened visibility and national media exposure associated with the Kentucky Derby Festival. The first of these occurred within the timeframe of the national civil rights movement. In spring of 1967, the struggle for open housing in Louisville and the increasingly violent clashes between 'hecklers' and peaceful protestors gained considerable national media exposure. Local activists secured the aid of national civil rights leaders and focused their protest efforts on the Kentucky Derby Festival, even threatening to shut down the actual horse race itself. The protests of 1967 mirror a second protest movement that was organized in 2000. In the wake of repeated instances of police violence toward African Americans in Louisville, West Louisvillians took to the streets in protest, led by both local and national activists. As in 1967, these protests led up to and culminated with the Kentucky Derby Festival, with threats again made to shut down the Derby if protest demands were not met.

The intersections between festival and protest reveal the ways in which marginalized populations can assert a political voice to a wider audience and pressure authorities to come to the table to negotiate a solution. Analysis of these two particular protest movements in Louisville demonstrates which tactics have been successfully deployed, which tactics have been strategically avoided, and the drawn-out process by

which political successes have been eventually achieved. These findings reaffirm the important linkages between festival and protest as being not merely a 'safety valve' by which sociopolitical tensions are released but as a real venue through which real change can be had.

As I am writing the final revisions for this dissertation, I cannot help but notice its significance within the context of current political events within this country. For two weeks, protestors in Ferguson, Missouri have clashed with police and authorities after the slaying of a young black male by a white police officer. While media accounts of the protests during daylight hours have described them as largely peaceful, nighttime protests have been characterized by gunfire, teargas, riotous behavior, and the arrests of hundreds of demonstrators. The parallels between the situation in Ferguson and some of the events described in this dissertation are considerable, though it should be noted that this dissertation focuses more directly on the relationship between festival and protest. Nonetheless, the issues of racialized police violence, the (over)use of force to dispel protestors, and conflict between impoverished African American communities and the police are ones that continue to emerge in cities throughout the U.S. It is my hope that this dissertation will contribute positively to a better understanding of how the relationship between the police and marginalized communities can be improved for the betterment of all.

Chapter Preview

This dissertation is structured in a combined chronological and thematic manner. The next chapter details the extent to which research and analysis for this project draws

upon and contributes to a number of different bodies of literature, both within the discipline of geography and beyond. This chapter explores the concepts of place, identity, representation, and belonging that are at the heart of this dissertation. This chapter also explores the literature in cultural geography, or more broadly, cultural studies, that focuses on the ideas of carnival and festival. At the head of the table, so to speak, for this literature is the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, whose influential book *Rabelais and His World* (1968) has influenced and stimulated scholars to consider both the cultural and political significance of carnival times. Bakhtin argues that carnival time serves as a fleeting opportunity for the marginalized and oppressed to subvert and transgress the dominant order. During this time, established norms are turned upside down and inside out, there is a reversal of the sacred and profane, and the festive spirit enables participants to produce a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse. Some scholars have been critical of Bakhtin's notion of the liberating festival, arguing that, rather than acting as a transgression of the dominant order, it actually buttresses the establishment by acting as a temporary safety valve whereby the marginalized and oppressed can release their tensions and frustrations within a confined and controlled framework. All the while, the festival times are temporary, and once over, the dominant structures are retrenched. Still other scholars have emphasized the liberatory potential of carnival time as one that should be highlighted as an example of the marginalized and oppressed seek to assert their voices as part of the total narrative. Some scholars have built upon the Bakhtinian literature to consider the festive practices of diasporic African communities, particularly in the Americas. Within the diasporic tradition, carnival practices are described as either hybridized or syncretized, a melding of the traditional African practices with localized

cultural practices evolving over time. Carnival and its many offshoots are prime examples of the ambivalent nature of festival times, a melding of the cultural and political, the festival and the protest.

Chapter three describes the project's design and the methods used to carry out the research. This includes a discussion of some of the key methodological challenges associated with this type of research, including positionality and insider/outsider considerations. The primary methods used in this research include interviews, archival research, and media analysis. The specifics of how each of these methods were deployed is outlined in this chapter.

The fourth chapter offers a look at the history and development of both the running of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs and the associated city-wide and two-week long Kentucky Derby Festival. The Kentucky Derby Festival is the signature cultural event on the calendar for the city of Louisville, drawing in thousands of visitors for the events. The Festival is one of the largest of its kind in the country, and includes events ranging from an air show and fireworks display, hot air balloon events, a charity-based marathon, and many other parties and specialty events. Additionally, the city becomes the focal point of the sporting world for the race itself, with media coverage around the world. Celebrities, dignitaries, and wealthy elite arrive as well, adding a sense of pageantry as people dress up in their favorite Derby attire. This chapter juxtaposes the 'official' narrative associated with the Kentucky Derby Festival alongside alternate understandings of the events among African American residents in the city. Both the Festival and the associated race developed at particular times in Louisville's history where segregation and marginalization were the established, and sometimes legally enforced, practices. The Derby began in the 1880s at a

time where Jim Crow laws were just beginning to take hold in the South. While in the early years African American jockeys were common in the sport, by the 1920s they were gone almost completely. The Kentucky Derby Festival began in the 1950s at a time before the Civil Rights movement had made significant headway in Louisville. As a result, input from African Americans was minimal on the organization of the festivities, and this marginalization remained common up until more recently. As a result of all this, African Americans in the city have mixed opinions about the Derby. Some are appreciative of the events in terms of their importance to the city while others are entirely dismissive of the events as something that is only for other people to enjoy. Nonetheless, nearly all interviewed expressed that Derby time was a good time for partying in the city, even if partying entailed doing something entirely different or opposed to the officially sanctioned events.

Chapter five offers a more in depth look at the history of African Americans in Louisville to provide a deeper context of the relationship between the Kentucky Derby Festival and the West Louisville community. It has been argued elsewhere that Kentucky did not join the Confederacy until after the Civil War, and so this chapter begins with a peek at the post-Civil War setting. Kentucky, and Louisville in particular, became a stronghold for ex-Confederate officers, as many assumed prominent positions in the city. Newly freed blacks found little opportunity for integration into the economic mainstream, and rural areas around the state were characterized by violence and lynching of African Americans. The era of Jim Crow and legalized segregation and economic marginalization followed, relegating African Americans to particular places within the city. Still, in some places the African American community thrived, establishing the bustling Walnut Street

business district in Louisville. This area was later decimated in the 1950s by urban renewal programs by the city administration. This historical narrative leads up to the civil rights era in the 1960s in Louisville, and in particular, to a series of events related directly to the Kentucky Derby Festival. By 1968, the battle for civil rights was in full force in the city, and this year in particular centered on the matter of an open housing ordinance. For decades, the city had had legalized housing restrictions against African Americans, and even after this law was deemed unconstitutional, the practice remained widely and strictly enforced throughout the city. The controversy came to a head at Derby time 1968. This chapter chronicles how African American activists, including Martin Luther King Jr, leveraged protests and threats of disruption of the Derby Festival to gain political advantage for the battle over open housing. These events represent the first example of the blending of the political and the cultural as it pertains to African Americans and the Kentucky Derby Festival.

Chapter six fast forwards to more recent times and explores the origins of Derby cruising. This chapter begins with a socio-economic analysis of West Louisville over the last two decades. This chapter also introduces a few concepts borrowed from urban sociologists, those being “hyper-segregation” and “hyper-ghettoization”. The concepts are applicable in this context to the extent to which they help explain West Louisville, which is the setting for this dissertation. This chapter melds research gleaned from media sources with information obtained from interviews with residents. Together, these sources produce a fairly detailed account of both the history of cruising in the city and the more recent history of West Louisville Derby celebrations. The fifth chapter also demonstrates the mingling of the political and cultural festival practices, as Derby cruising nearly spawned

a full blown Derby protest toward the city. In the late 1990s, there was a growing tension between African Americans in the city and the police, and this tension was exasperated by a series of controversial violent and deadly encounters between black Louisvillians and police officers. As Derby 2000 neared, local activists ramped up the pressure on the city to address their concerns by using the visibility of the Derby Festival to promote their message to a national audience. The strategy worked, as activists from around the country lent their support for the cause. The protest movement was ultimately successful at gaining some concessions from the city, including the institution of a Citizens Review Board for the police department, the hiring of the city's first African American police chief, and improved policies to guide policing tactics.

The seventh chapter follows the timeline of Derby cruising past the early years, which were characterized by tension and uncertainty, and into the following five years where Derby cruising took off and became a widespread community event for West Louisville. This chapter chronicles the efforts of West Louisville leaders to add some formality to the events by establishing a city-approved vendor's fair at the center of the activities on West Broadway. This chapter explores the notions of identity, place and belonging by examining how different segments of the West Louisville community participated in and interpreted the events. This chapter explores the extent to which Derby cruising was understood to be representative of the community, and how such representations were complicated along lines of age, gender, class, and space.

The eighth chapter delves into the controversy over the eventual ending of Derby cruising. Despite, or perhaps because of the great success and widespread popularity of Derby cruising, city leaders had grown uneasy toward the annual events, fearful of the

potentiality of lawless behavior at the largely uncontrolled events. In 2005, a spate of violence, some of which was connected to Derby cruising, presented the city a chance to leverage public safety concerns enough to initiate a plan to end the events the following year. In 2006, to the dismay of many, but to the relief of others, the city decided to strictly enforce a "no-cruising" ordinance on West Broadway for the duration of the Derby Festival. Despite community outcries and a formal lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, the city was successful at instituting its plan, and Derby cruising was effectively ended. This final chapter chronicles the events associated with the ending of Derby cruising and also offers a critical examination of the city's and community's stance toward the events. The chapter explores the extent to which race and class played a role in defining how the city reacted to cruising and enforced the No Cruising ordinance. This chapter also examines some of the outcomes of the ending of Derby cruising. On the one hand, as many residents describe, Derby weekend is now a dead scene in West Louisville, as police have cracked down on any semblance of partying that appears similar in nature to cruising. For many residents, Derby is no longer a celebration at all, it is just another weekend in May. On the other hand, a positive outcome is the improved relations between the police force and the West Louisville community. Residents spoke of the positive outcomes of having police more closely involved with community leaders, the brief but symbolic importance of the citizen review board, and the installation of more responsive police leadership to the concerns of West Louisville residents.

A ninth, and final, chapter sums up the major findings from this project. This includes a discussion of the implications for West Louisville. In many of the interviews conducted through this research, West Louisville residents were well aware of lasting

impacts of the controversy over the ending of Derby cruising. This chapter draws closely from interviews to illuminate the different ways in which the fractured relationship between West Louisville and the city's Kentucky Derby Festival have been further damaged by the events that constituted the ending of Derby cruising. This chapter also reviews the major findings from the dissertation as a whole, with a particular focus on the contributions of this research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMINGS

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of this research, it is necessary to understand how some of the key concepts and ideas that inform this research have been theorized by previous scholars. As such, this chapter outlines the multiple bodies of literature to which this dissertation contributes. This begins with an analysis of how social scientists have envisioned the interconnected cultural/political meanings associated with festival performances. Within this literature, two themes emerge: one of transgression/protest, and one of community representation. Working through Bakhtin (1968), Cohen (1993), and others, this chapter examines how festival times are understood to be a critical opportunity for marginalized populations to assert a political voice. These practices are especially relevant within the context of African American and Afro-Caribbean festivals. Working through Gilroy (1993), Irobi (2007), Hall (1990), and others, this chapter explores how a shared diasporic legacy has informed syncretized festival practices throughout the Americas. The second half of this chapter analyses more closely how these festival practices relate to key geographic concepts to which this dissertation contributes, including place, identity, representation and belonging. How these themes emerge through the spaces of West Louisville and through particular Derby festival practices constitute the focus of this project.

Festival Transgression and Protest

Bakhtin

Research on festival, particularly in the social sciences, has been influenced by the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher and literary critic. Many of Bakhtin's

most influential works were written during early soviet rule in Russia, particularly during Stalin's reign. Bakhtin was imprisoned in 1929, either because of his political persuasions or merely as part of a general purge of academics, but avoided sentencing to the dreaded prison camp in the near-Arctic Solovetsky Islands of Siberia due to poor health (Hitchcock 1998). He was instead temporarily exiled to Kustanai, Kazakhstan where his health condition, which was caused by osteomyelitis, worsened to the point where he had to have his right leg amputated in 1938. It was after this point that Bakhtin wrote *Rabelais and His World*, which is viewed by many as an allegorical criticism of the soviet regime.

In the late 1960s, Bakhtin's writings were 'discovered' by Western European and American scholars, and his works were translated into English for the first time. Since that time, Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* has become among the foundational works for academics conducting cultural and political analysis of festival. In the book, Bakhtin revisits *Pantagruel*, the 15th century text of Rabelais, which describes in lurid detail the activities that took place during medieval carnival festivities. Bakhtin's analysis was unique in that it interpreted the spectacle of medieval carnival as an act of political resistance in opposition to the dominant order.

In medieval times carnival was an offshoot of the official celebration, which was oftentimes a religious feast or some other celebration related to feudal order. For Bakhtin, the official feast was a consecration of inequality, a symbolic show of power and order. The official celebration represented all that was "stable, unchanging, perennial: the existing hierarchy, the existing religious, political and moral values, norms and prohibitions, the predominant truth put forward as external and indisputable" (Bakhtin 1968, 9). Carnival, however, represented a brief and fleeting inversion of the established order, a "time out of

time" (Turner and Turner, 1978). Whereas the official feast was characterized by royal and religious seriousness, pomp and circumstance, carnival was a celebration of laughter, parody, and mockery directed toward the established order. Bakhtin argues that carnival could not take place without the official feast; the two are flip sides of the same coin. Carnival represents the unofficial, extrapolitical second world of the common man, the "people's second life" (11). Additionally, carnival was a feast of becoming, change, and renewal. And importantly, carnival was universal. Carnival was a spectacle of the people, and everyone was included. As such, carnival represented a suspension of rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions.

For Bakhtin, carnival served as an ambivalent process of negation and inversion of the social order. This spectacle of ambivalence and resistance is encompassed through the term carnivalesque. Carnivalesque takes form through two festive practices:

- Festive Laughter: "The people's ambivalent laughter expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it" (12). Bakhtin's notion of laughter here represents something more than simply an individual's reaction to a joke, it represents a "social consciousness of the people" (92). It captures the festive attitude of celebration. Laughter here is ambivalent in that it both tears down and lifts up. It tears down the seriousness and everyday violence of oppression by mocking feudal rule, such as through the "feast of fools" (74). It lifts up by liberating the people, at least temporarily, from fear of the sacred, of prohibitions, of the past, and of power. Bakhtin argues that "pure laughter" does not deny seriousness, but rather purifies and completes it. Even in mocking the established order, such as through the parodic spectacle of disrobing and debasing "the king" (oftentimes this role was played by a clown), this process nonetheless reified the

dominant order in place outside of carnival. Bakhtin argues that as time has passed, medieval carnivals have gone by the wayside and festivals have gradually lost this ambivalent element; in particular they have lost this rejuvenating element. Laughter has been reduced to cold humor, irony and sarcasm.

- Grotesque Realism: "degradation, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body their indissoluble unity" (20). For Bakhtin, grotesque realism is highly organic in that it is symbolic of the entire life cycle of birth, death, and reproduction. In medieval carnival, grotesque realism was present in the spectacle of excess. It included mockery of kings and feudal order through debasement, particularly through themes of the "lower strata" of the bowels and reproductive organs. For Bakhtin, grotesque realism was ambivalent; its principal was "degradation of all that is spiritual, ideal, abstract, a lowering to the sphere of the earth and body" (19). However, it does not just degrade, it also renews and regenerates. "To degrade is to bury, sow, kill; but also to bring forth something more and better" (21).

For Bakhtin, the spectacle of carnival as an ambivalent inversion offers a utopian interpretation of medieval carnival. The carnivalesque suspension of oppressive and dogmatic rule provides a temporary transfer to the utopian realm, and for Bakhtin, this is inseparable from "the earth, nature, and the cosmos" (276). However, this inversion is always temporary, a "festive luxury" that is never able to coalesce into a purposeful and effective opposition. "Victory laughter was always followed by fears and oppressions of everyday life." And as Bakhtin reminds, "medieval seriousness did impress the people",

as it was "infused with elements of fear, weakness, humility, submissions, falsehood, hypocrisy, or on the other hand violence, intimidation, threats, prohibitions" (93).

Nonetheless, the festival is a "primary indestructible ingredient of human civilization" (276). Even as Bakhtin notes that the political potentiality of festival has "become sterile and even degenerate" (276) it has not disappeared completely. Bakhtin's analysis of medieval carnival serves as a useful interpretive framework for beginning to peel back the many layers of meaning associated with contemporary urban festivals. Bakhtin argues for a paradoxical and ambivalent process of subverting and affirming, bringing down and lifting up, decaying and rejuvenating. Importantly, the body is the stage for this ambivalent spectacle, where excesses displaying the very basest of bodily functions represent the bringing down of all that is holy and dogmatic to the realm of nature and humanity. Everything is dialogically a part of the life, death, rebirth process.

In the decades since Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* has been translated into English, a number of scholars have continued interpretation and analysis of Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque. On the ambivalent spectacle, Stamm (1983, 55) writes

> "On the positive side, carnival suggests the joyful affirmation of becoming. It is ecstatic collectivity, the superseding of the individuating principle in what Nietzsche called 'the glowing life of Dionysian revellers'… On the negative, critical side, the carnivalesque suggests a demystificatory instrument for everything in the social formation which renders such collectivity difficult of access: class hierarchy, political manipulation, sexual repression, dogmatism and paranoia. Carnival in this sense implies an attitude of creative disrespect, a radical opposition to the illegitimately powerful, to the morose and monological."

Lachmann (1989, 124) argues that Bakhtin's work demonstrates how the carnival sublimates "death and finiteness" through the spectacle of laughter, mockery and exaggeration; in other words, by ridiculing and refusing the totality of authoritarian rule

(i.e. the feudal system and the Christian Church's dogmatic control), carnival participants overcome their powerlessness to control their own place in society, even if only on a temporary basis. In this way, the carnival spectacle serves as a political act of resistance in undermining the ruling effort to hegemonize (Kelly and Kaplan 1990).

Cultural/Political Critiques of Bakhtin

Though Bakhtin's work generally remains held in high regard, it has not gone without critical examination. Some have been suspicious of the utility of considering carnival as an act of political resistance, arguing that to the contrary, carnival is a useful tool of the dominant class. In this argument, carnival serves as a release valve for the underclass to "blow off some steam" in a transgressive but ultimately harmless manner. In this way, carnival actually helps buttress rather than subvert the dominant order. Elias (1978) places this dynamic within a framework where carnival serves as a legitimate site for the controlled release of political and emotional tension so as to maintain civilized discourse and self-restraint outside of carnival time. In this way, carnival is more about the disciplining of discontent (Philips 1998): in allowing a temporary release from societal restraints, the wider social structure and dominant narrative is preserved.

Similarly, Ravenscroft and Matteucci (2003) are critical of the idea of festival as promoting community values and cultural authenticity. They argue that festival, as controlled by the state or governing body, presents a controlled and particularized image of the community, one that legitimates the wider social structure and elides the true carnivalesque. In their framework, cultural authenticity is a function of the individual, not the event. At the same, the spectacle of festival encourages participants to seek out the

inauthentic, and commodified presentations of carnival in particular purposefully appeal to this type of activity. Borrowing from Foucault's notion of heterotropia (1984), Ravencroft and Matteucci argue that festival exists as a "liminal zone that offers neither genuine freedom nor genuine control. Instead it offers the possibility of a temporary lifting of the moral code" (2). Because of this, rather than inverting the wider social structure, festival actually reinforces and reifies the dominant cultural and moral codes already in place in the everyday routine of the community.

Ravenscroft and Gilchrist (2009) serve a reminder that Bakhtinian analysis of festival is about more than just spectacle and the grotesque, arguing that his work is more about understanding the methods and modalities of governance and discipline. They argue that contemporary festivals purposefully incorporate the carnivalesque as a means of reinforcing the social order and the disciplining of bodies and behaviors. Under such circumstances, festival goers can participate in deviant activities which would normally be unacceptable, all the while knowing that this is a temporary condition, and once festival is over, the prevailing social and moral order will return. In this way, "Carnival is a contradictory social institution. It is both a popular expression of folk culture, which signals an alternate conception for the ordering of human society, and a bulwark of authority, built into the fabric of communal governance, which is permitted, even fostered, by those very authorities" (37). Ravenscroft and Gilchrist argue further that carnival is a "vital defense" for authority to prevent civil unrest, a defense that disguises the larger oppressive nature of the social order. In sanctioning, and perhaps even encouraging, transgressive behaviors for a fleeting time during carnival, authorities normalize and control such behaviors that may have taken place anyway but seem less oppositional given the circumstances. And of

course this process is not static, as the boundaries of what constitutes allowable and transgressive are continuously under negotiation and contestation.

Ravenscroft and Gilchrist are critical of "Disneyfied" festivals as sites of true carnivalesque, arguing that such sites are more reflective of the wider cultural shift from production to consumption. In particular, they are critical of festivals that are less about the performative and spontaneous movement of bodies in space, and more about the passive gaze of the spectator. To truly find the carnivalesque in practice, they argue, one must investigate liminal or marginalized activities and practices that operate truly outside of or opposed to the official realm. "Such liminal events offer forums through which transgressive behaviors can simultaneously be encouraged, controlled, and where necessary, marginalized" (36). Even in such sites, the potential for collectivized political opposition to emerge is highly unlikely, because as Bakhtin wrote, the carnival atmosphere is characterized by a festive laughter of "drunken laughter, curses, popular blazons and billingsgate" (1968, 5). According to their argument, this is hardly the setting for effective political discourse.

Green (2007), too, has observed the shift of emphasis from carnival production to carnival consumption, arguing that carnival promoters are fully aware of the desire among spectators (and potential consumers) to experience 'authentic' cultural practices and productions. To meet this demand, cultural brokers commodify aspects of culture that they deem to be the most authentic and most sellable, and in doing so, stifle true cultural creativity in the name of nationalism and economic gain.

Not all scholars on festival are satisfied with reducing the transgressive elements of carnival to simply "blowing off steam" and reifying the status quo. Stallybrass and White

(1993, 1986) argue, while carnival is more often than not simply a release valve for the oppressed, the potentiality for it to become something more impactful remains inherent. They argue, "for long periods carnival may be a stable and cyclical ritual with no noticeable politically transformative effects but that, given the presence of sharpened political antagonism, it may often act as catalyst and site of actual and symbolic struggle" (1986, 14). Nonetheless, Stallybrass and White acknowledge the historical diminishing of the carnivalesque and the corresponding rise of the middle class in Western society. Rather than considering carnivalesque destroyed, however, they describe the middle class' eschewal of carnivalesque as a process of fragmentation, marginalization, sublimation, and repression. In completing the process, carnivalesque has now been reconstructed as a "culture of the Other," encoding "all that which the proper bourgeois must strive not to be in order to preserve a stable and 'correct' sense of self" (1993, 387). Further, as Smith (1995) argues, it is through oppositional practices that the carnivalesque "negotiates its own social space and positions its own social boundaries" (147).

Carnival and Transgression

In *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986), Stallybrass and White use Bakhtin's conception of the ambivalent spectacle as a jumping off point for examining the notion of transgression. Borrowing from Babcock (1978), they define transgression as symbolic inversion, or "any act of expressive behavior which inverts, contradicts, abrogates or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms, be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, social and political". Stallybrass and White argue that the underlying transgressive processes at work with the

carnivalesque extend beyond festival times, and are intrinsic to social systems in general. Stallybrass and White also incorporate Bakhtin's distinction between the 'high' and 'low' elements of culture which are delineated largely by social class.

> "A recurrent pattern emerges: the 'top' attempts to reject and eliminate the 'bottom' for reasons of prestige and status, only to discover, not only that it is in some way frequently dependent upon that low-Other, but also that the top includes that low symbolically, as a primary eroticized constituent of its own fantasy life. The result is a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire in the construction of subjectivity: a psychological dependence upon precisely those Others which are being rigorously opposed and excluded at the social level" (5).

Stallybrass and White conceive transgression as taking place within four symbolic domains - psychic forms, the human body, geographical space, and the social order. Within each of these four domains, which are intrinsically linked, hierarchies are structured and transgressed. Cultures "think themselves in the most immediate and affective ways through the combined symbolisms of these four hierarchies" (3), and transgressions taking place within one domain may cause immediate and significant changes in the others. Reflecting on Stallybrass and White's work on transgression, Stuart Hall argues "the important point is the ordering of different aesthetic morals, social aesthetics, the orderings of culture that open up culture to the play of power, not an inventory of what is high versus what is low at any particular moment" (1993, 110).

Riggio (2004) explores the transgressive element of festival through her work on contemporary carnival in Trinidad and the Americas. Riggio argues that carnival is situated liminally between the margins of the past and the future and is thus capable of incorporating and/or resisting a broad range of cultural influences. Like Bakhtin, Riggio argues that carnival is ambivalent in subverting and affirming the dominant order, but that it has the "inherent capacity to appropriate spaces and transgress boundaries in order to

manifest and celebrate aspects of human community" (15). Riggio similarly argues that carnival "reaches the human spirit through the flesh, fueled by too much food, too much drink and too much sex" (19). Riggio's analysis of carnival includes a particularly geographic conception of festival by arguing that it is inherently territorial. "As the aesthetic equivalent of social protest, carnival claims city streets and other urban spaces or village squares not only for the momentary pleasures of play but also implicitly (and for many of the participants probably unconsciously) to affirm its right to those streets" (24). Furthermore, Riggio argues that the appropriation of these spaces during carnival time marks the spaces permanently as belonging to those who celebrate there.

Analyzing Carnival in Trinidad and its many offshoots, Nurse (1999) incorporates Bakhtinian analysis with postcolonial theory, as put forth by Homi Bhaba and Stuart Hall. Nurse argues that Carnival and its many offshoots serve as a bond between a diasporic community in its efforts to "shape a cultural identity through resistance, liberation and catharsis" (662). In this way, Carnival is understood as a process of both cultural globalization and hybridized cultural practices among the many different social groups. At the same time, Carnival employs a transgressive and inversive mode which "confronts and subverts hegemonic modes of representation and thus acts as a counter-hegemonic tradition for the contestations and conflicts embodied in constructions of class, nation, 'race', gender, sexuality, and ethnicity" (663).

Nurse is critical of the 'carnival as safety valve' thesis, arguing that, while carnivalesque rituals and practices may be ill-prepared to define the exact contours of an oppositional politics, they nonetheless are well-equipped to imagine a utopian social order in opposition to the established norms (see also Gardiner 1992). Further, Nurse argues that

while Anglo-American and European festivals may well have lost their transgressive edge, Caribbean and Latin American festivals continue to have a decided political flavor through the cultural productions. As he writes,

> "The carnivals of the Americas, to different degrees, have acted as a ritual site for sociocultural contestations and aesthetic resistance, between a hegemonic European group and subordinate indigenous, Creole, mestizo and African peoples. They generally embody rituals of social protest that critique and parody the process of enforced hybridization and transculturation embedded in colonial and neocolonial society. Many of the carnival celebrations involve transgressive activities that are aimed at redefining or accommodating the resultant heterogeneous cultural and racial identities and contested cultural spaces that are an outcome of globalization processes" (667).

Nurse notes how Carnival practices intersect with both globalized and localized racial and ethnic imaginings in complex ways in particular places. As he writes, "one can argue that the sociopolitical and cultural conflicts, based on race, class, gender, ethnicity, nation and empire that are embedded in the Trinidad carnival were transplanted to the metropolitan context" (667). Here, conflict over the existence and meanings of carnival are complicated by racial and sexual stereotypes that depict the black male as 'dangerous' and the black female as 'promiscuous' (Hernandez-Ramdwar 1996). And as the festivities become larger and more popular, they become increasingly perceived by authorities as a legitimate threat to the prevailing order. Nonetheless, Nurse cautions against reducing Carnival into a political and cultural binary of integration versus resistance, and instead focuses on the hybridized cultural practices that co-opt and resist in diverse and fluid ways.

These literatures on festival and transgression establish a framework for exploring how marginalized populations may challenge the dominant order (Humphrey 2001). Bakhtin's notion of transgression and the carnivalesque addresses resistance at an embodied or organic level, where opposition is performed through festival practices of

festive laughter and grotesque realism (Gardiner 2004; Grimes 1982). Stallybrass and White broaden the scope of transgression by exploring how hierarchies are established and then transgressed both structurally and spatially. In both conceptions of transgression, the structures of the dominant and the oppressed are intrinsically linked. Bakhtin considers this linkage from the bottom up, where the carnivalesque is only possible as an offshoot of the 'official' festival and cannot exist without it. Stallybrass and White consider this linkage in reverse, where 'high' culture depends upon the transgressive elements of 'low' culture, both as something that is to be officially rejected but yet remains symbolically essential to the creation of subjectivity.

This dissertation incorporates these conceptions of transgression into an analysis of the Kentucky Derby Festival as it relates to the West Louisville African American community. This dissertation explores how festive transgression manifests spatially across the urban contours, with a specific focus on how 'the streets' are imbricated in how transgression is understood and defined both from within and from the outside looking in. This dissertation argues against the theory of festive transgression as merely being a safety valve by demonstrating how African Americans in Louisville have repeatedly mobilized at festival time to achieve real political gains. In this way, resistance through festival can sometimes be merely transgressive of societal norms, or at other times can be overtly political, as in the form of organized protest movements.

Diaspora and Festival

While these theories of festival and transgression are helpful in understanding Derby cruising, they are incomplete without also considering the elements of festival that

are unique to African American festival performances. Along these lines, scholars have contextualized African American festival practices within theories of African diaspora to explore the linkages of transgression and protest. This dissertation incorporates this literature to demonstrate how the oppositional nature of Derby cruising fits within the wider diasporic experiences of African Americans. In doing so, it demonstrates the importance of understanding this cultural lineage, and yet also demonstrates how localized syncretization results in unique cultural and political practices.

Paul Gilroy's influential book, *Black Atlantic* (1993), argues for an understanding of African diasporic identities as being hybridized, decentered, and based on the movement and interconnections between African diasporic communities. In particular, Gilroy is concerned with black populations historically displaced through the slave trade and relocated in the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe. For Gilroy, the notion of a Black Atlantic serves as a heuristic for understanding how the "stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal cultural forms originate by, but no longer the exclusive property of, blacks dispersed within the structures of feeling, producing, communicating, and remembering" (3).

Gilroy offers the image of the ship as a chronotype signifying the mobility and transnational connections between diasporic communities. "Ships immediately focus attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts" (4). However Gilroy argues strongly against any nationalist or essentialist notions of diasporic identities, instead emphasizing how processes of "creolisation and syncretism" (15) have created unique ethnic and political cultures in different localities. Indeed, Gilroy argues the idea of a Black Atlantic can be understood

as an attempt to "transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity" (19).

For Gilroy, African diasporic cultural forms represent a "counterculture of modernity." Central to this is the shared legacy and terror of slavery among diasporic communities. At an abstract or moral level, the institution of slavery contradicted Western ideals of progress through modernity. At the same time, at an economic level slavery enabled European cultural and economic hegemony across the New World. As embodied legacies of this disconnect, African diasporic communities occupy "an unsteady location simultaneously inside and outside modernity" (73). As such, Gilroy argues for a "politics of transfiguration", one that is "played, danced, and acted, as well as sung and sung about", and one which "reconstructs its own critical, intellectual, and moral genealogy in a partially hidden public sphere of its own" (37-8). Gilroy traces the efforts of this politics of transfiguration through the transnational connections between and movements by prominent black scholars, authors, musicians and cultural critics.

Irobi (2007) takes issue with Gilroy's argument of the Black Atlantic as being characterized by a rupture from its African roots. Irobi argues that, rather than being severed, African cultural forms were "transformed, syncretized, or creolized in the African diaspora" (897). Irobi illustrates this argument by examining the persistence in the "significance, meaning, semiology, performance theories, ontological framework, and most important, functionality of these African-derived forms" (897). Irobi examines similarities in West African festival theater aesthetics and Carnival-derived festival performances of the Black Atlantic, including those in the Caribbean, Britain, and North

America. For Irobi, these similarities constitute a process of "translocation, continuity, and self-redefinition" (897) within and among peoples of the African diaspora.

Working through the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Irobi argues that African cultural forms are passed down generation to generation phenomenologically, or through embodied experience. He writes "The body is the primary instrument for incubating, articulating, and expressing all ideas as well as transporting all art, be it music, drama, literature, electronic messages, theater festival, or carnival" (901). As these cultural forms are hybridized and syncretized within particular diasporic localities, they become the basis for resisting "total incorporation" (901) into the dominant Anglo cultural and social systems.

For Irobi, carnival and other festive forms of the African diaspora represent fruitful venues for exploring prevailing African sensibilities. Here, carnival simultaneously serves two functions. One, carnival reinforces and strengthens "notions of identity, communality, liminality and continuity" (903). Two, carnival allows for the more transgressive and exhibitionist elements of society to come to the forefront, including "clowning, ribaldry, irreverent activities, raising the leg, playing the devil, stick fighting, and symbolic gender reversals that make psychic and sexual liberation and catharsis possible" (904). In both cases, the body remains the signifier and instrument for conveying and grounding hybridized and syncretized African diasporic subjectivity (904).

Yaw Owusu-Frempong (2005) argues for an Afro-centric approach to understanding the similarities between African festivals and contemporary African American festivals. By Afro-centric, Owusu-Frempong means "there is a certain African worldview and value system to which can be related all other central concepts, including

those of religion, morality, and social organization" (730). Festivals are a fertile ground for exploring Afro-centric cultural forms because they "are a powerful social activity that binds us together as a people and through which we can transmit knowledge and experience to future generations" (731). Owusu-Frempong adopts a utopian perspective on the positive potentiality of festival to "provide a consciousness based on guiding beliefs of the African society," promote "cultural reconstruction and intergenerational transmission," and counteract the negative effects of marginalization within the American urban experience.

Stuart Hall (1993) explores the roles of marginalization and transgression in constituting the "black" in black culture. Within the framework of a cultural politics of difference, Hall argues that the margins of society, the liminal spaces peripheral to the mainstream, have become a productive space for the emergence and performance of new identities. This is true for marginalized voices of many types, including those focused on race, gender, sexuality and others. For black popular culture, this entails a recognition of strategic contestation as central. And Hall reminds us to avoid "the simple binary oppositions that are still habitually used to map it out: high and low; resistance versus incorporation; authentic versus unauthentic; experiential versus formal; opposition versus homogenization" (112).

Hall considers black popular culture within the legacy of the African diaspora, where oppressive and marginalized conditions limited the availability of cultural expressions. "In its expressivity, its musicality, its orality, in its rich, deep, and varied attention to speech, in its inflections toward the vernacular and the local, in its rich production of counternarratives, and above all, in its metaphorical use of the musical

vocabulary, black popular culture has enabled the surfacing, inside the mixed and contradictory modes even of some mainstream popular culture, of elements of a discourse that is different - other forms of life, other traditions of representation" (113). Performative spaces were the only ones available for the transmission of culture, and Hall maps these black popular cultural forms onto the performances of style, music, and the body. As he states, "We have worked on ourselves as the canvases of representation" (114).

As such, Hall argues these forms are overdetermined in that they result from cultural transmission through the generations as well as being forged through the diasporic conditions which people encountered and contested on a daily basis. As such, there are no pure cultural forms, rather these forms are always the product of "partial synchronization" across cultures, traditions, and positionalities. Further, they are cultural adaptations, hybridized and syncretized expressions of black popular culture. Hall writes,

> "It is this mark of difference inside forms of popular culture - which are by definition contradictory and which therefore appear as impure, threatened by incorporation or exclusion - that is carried by the signifier "black" in the term "black popular culture." It has come to signify the black community, where these traditions were kept, and whose struggles survive in the persistence of the black experience (the historical experience of black people in the diaspora), of the black aesthetic (the distinctive cultural repertoires out of which popular representations were made), and of the black counternarratives we have struggled to voice" (118).

J. Blaine Hudson (1997) discusses the relevance of African diasporic discussions of the "Black Atlantic" to the African American experience. Hudson argues that the fact of the African Diaspora, the forced displacement through the slave trade of millions of African born peoples to North American, South America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, is not enough by itself to support the construct of the "Black Atlantic". Rather, several fundamental questions must be addressed first before fully understanding and utilizing the

"Black Atlantic" construct. For example, was the cultural connection to Africa lost through dislocation, or did cultural forms persist? If they remained, how were they passed down and ultimately evolve over generations? What similarities and differences can be found among the different branches of the Diaspora?

To address these questions, Hudson considers the historical and cultural dimensions of the African Diaspora leading up to 1800, with particular emphasis on the African American experience. Displaced Africans enslaved in the Americas represented a multitude of places and cultures in Africa that were both distinct yet interrelated. Hudson argues "these experiences were merely variations on common themes, and Africans of the Diaspora shared much, such as a common point of origin, a common destination, and a common condition" (12). The process of becoming African Americans involved the blending, melding, and adapting of these cultural practices within the framework of a racist, hostile, and oppressive White dominated regime. Nonetheless, some aspects of African culture existed in a domain beyond the reach of slave owners. Such "syncretic" cultural and religious practices persisted through slavery, even if they did not survive fully intact over time.

Hudson concludes by arguing that the available historical and cultural sources suggest that the "Black Atlantic" began developing and taking shape long before the end of slavery. However, Hudson cautions how the "Black Atlantic" heuristic should be applied. "At issue is not the identity and uniformity of cultural forms, at all times and in all places throughout Africa and the Diaspora, but simply that Africans and their descendants drew on the same vast reservoir of cultural values and modes of expression in their struggle to retain some authentic sense of themselves as people and to combat slavery,

segregation, and colonialism" (13). To this end, Hudson reminds that there is no "cultural gene" pertaining to the "Black Atlantic," but rather that such cultural practices and traditions are learned and passed down successively through generations. Additionally, there is no "fixed essence" of the "Black Atlantic," and adopting a perspective "change and hybridity" allows for the embrace of "cultural evolution through ongoing cultural interaction, exchange, and development" (13).

In *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (1997), Richard D.E. Burton explores the historical processes and cultural forms of Jamaica, Trinidad and Haiti as he seeks to answer the question of "How "African" or, alternatively, how distinctly "Caribbean" or "creole" is (are) Afro-Caribbean culture(s)?" Burton argues that the syncretic process of creolization was characterized by both continuity and creativity, and this took place "at least as much within the slave community as between that community and the Whites" (5). Central to this emergent (and emerging) Afro-Creole culture was the role of power and opposition, and Burton uses festival and other ludic occasions to explore this dynamic. He writes, "the basic thesis is that in the Caribbean all play is oppositional and all oppositionality is "playful" or contains a "play element"" (9). Burton argues that such cultural oppositional forms, though readily apparent in carnival, are also present in all aspects of life. In other words, "what happens during the four days of carnival in Trinidad is not fundamentally at variance with what happens during the remaining 360-plus days of the year" (157). In this way, Burton echoes the argument of Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1993), who describes carnival as "ritual of intensification" rather than a ritual of reversal. Falassi (1987) argues further, "At festival times, people do something they normally do not; they abstain from something they normally do; they carry to the extreme behaviors

that are usually regulated by measure; they invert patterns of daily social life. Reversal, intensification, trespassing, and abstinence are the four cardinal points of festive behavior" (3).

The works reviewed here on African American experiences of festival, transgression, and resistance provide further nuance to Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque. These works place festive practices within a diasporic framework, where African American and Afro-Caribbean populations, linked by a shared history of slavery and oppression, have developed syncretized oppositional practices that meld this legacy with more localized traditions (Crichlow and Armstrong 2010; Armstrong 2010; Scher 2003; Chivallon 2002). This conception informs the practices of African Americans in Louisville, who have used the Kentucky Derby Festival as a platform for political protest. A recent manifestation of this was the transgressive and oppositional cultural/political practices of African Americans through Derby cruising. As will be explored in this dissertation, the origins and development of Derby cruising in West Louisville demonstrate these processes of syncretization and localization. Whereas Derby cruising did feature transgression and political resistance, it also was characterized by efforts of community building and the claiming of civic space. Analyzing how these various processes intersected and diverged across multiple social axes, including race, gender, class, religion, age, locale are a major contribution of this dissertation project.

Cruising/Parading/Festival

Although cruising as a cultural phenomenon has existed for several decades, it has received little attention from academia. This is somewhat surprising, given the

proliferation of the practice of cruising across the U.S. – both in small towns and in larger cities – and the frequency with which cruising has become a contentious issue in these places. The origins of cruising are not entirely known, though most associate the original popularity of cruising with the mass production of the automobile and its availability to teens beginning in the 1950s and 1960s (Gofman 2002). Cruising in this era is often depicted with an innocent and nostalgic aura as evidenced through popular cultural expressions such as the film *American Graffiti* and the music of the Beach Boys (Witzel and Bash 1997).

In the 1970s, a particular form of cruising, lowriding, originated among Latino teens in the U.S. Southwest, especially Los Angeles. Lowriding was a particular expression of ethnic and class-based identities involving the modification and usage of older cars in a distinct and stylistic manner, i.e. "slow and low" (Vigil 1991). One early study described lowriders as "more than merely a 'car-oriented' subculture. They form a subculture in which the automobile is the focal concern: the fundamental basis of social organization and participation and the primary vehicle of self-expression" (Allard Holtz 1975, 496). In 1977, *Lowrider Magazine* was founded in San Jose, CA, and it quickly became the purveyor of the lowriding subculture to a wider audience.

More recent work has focused on the interplay between lowriding as a means of self-identification, community construction and as a response to societal marginalization (Bright 1998). In *Fast Cars, Cool Rides* (Best, 2005), an ethnography of the cruising and street racing scene among youths in San Jose, CA, cruising is described as an activity that enables "young Chicanos to feel a sense of connection to an imagined community, a symbolic community through which they gain a sense of themselves as a collective based

on their connection to particular practices and particular places" (36). Best also describes the lowriding scene as a space dominated by masculinist displays, including the cars themselves and the interactions between young men and women: “The street is their stage, the cars their props, and young women's bodies the key resources in the decadent play of identities and the transgression of moral boundaries” (61).

In contemporary culture, cruising remains a popular activity for teens of all ethnicities throughout the U.S. – both in larger cities and in small towns. Indeed, in a rare show of support for cruising, the town of Somerset, KY recently applied for the official designation “Cruising Capital of Kentucky” (Gerth 2008). In most instances where cruising gains popularity, though, city governments quickly pass anti-cruising ordinances to curb the practice. Gofman (2002) provides a thorough legal review of anti-cruising ordinances and demonstrates how in most instances such ordinances have held up to judicial review. Gofman offers, "It is ironic that many of the baby-boomer legislators passing anti-cruising laws today may have been cruisers themselves in the 1950s and 1960s, a time when cruising, at least in the light of nostalgia, seemed entirely innocent. But to many communities, cruising today presents problems not seen in the 1950s and 1960s, such as congestion, crime and excessive noise to the extent not seen in the past (31)." These problems, real or perceived, played a significant role in the eventual controversy over Derby cruising in Louisville.

Much like cruising, parading and other forms of public ritual have interested scholars conducting research on communities’ efforts at self-expression, self-definition, and group representation (Marston 1989; Davis 1986). Goheen argues that parades should be understood as public processions in the streets with the semiotic power to communicate,

legitimate, and politicize a given set of values (Goheen 1993, 1990). In his work on parades in Northern Ireland, Jarman (1997) argues the importance of parades in the production of social memory through visual displays; parades are, in effect, "generators of meaning" (7), and the production of social memory – through parades, for example - becomes an active search for meaning. Regis' (1999) ethnographic research on second lining, a form of parading unique to New Orleans, reveals how the processions "transform urban space" (472); the positive communal image that second liners project counteracts the dominant representations of poverty and urban decay often associated with the second liners' neighborhood.

Parades and other forms of public ritual have also been examined for their importance to African Americans' efforts to control group representation and pronounce the right to public space and the political realm (Goings and Mohl 1996). African American festivals date back to colonial times, and annually held parades commemorated the abolition of slavery in the Northern states as early as 1808 (White 1996). Fabre (1994), similarly investigating the role of early African American commemorative celebrations, argues the celebratory feasts constructed an African American social memory that sometimes ran counter to national memory. In addition, "while performing during their celebrations, African Americans were training themselves and shaping their anticipated roles as full-fledged citizens, capable of participating in public affairs. Feasts were not only a 'big time' to enjoy; they held out a promise to refashion a better world and wield new power" (75). After the Civil War, parades became a central feature of African American social and political life in Southern cities. In Richmond, VA, parades enabled residents to claim the right to civic space, influence social memory, and create a sense of

community among the widespread African American citizens (Brown and Kimball 1996, 77).

Recent work by geographers has also emphasized the importance of space in understanding the many functions that parades serve. Through her research on the annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade in New York City, Marston (2002) argues the events "are self-consciously enacted in and shaped by the space within which they are performed" (375). The public nature of the processions in the streets can lead to intra-group conflict where different factions try to gain access to or control how the community is represented to a wider audience. Marston argues this point by documenting the struggles of the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization as its members are spurned in their attempts to gain a voice within the parade's organizing group. Veronis (2006) also discusses the internal politics of the Canadian Hispanic Day Parade. She argues the multicultural framework of the parade enables migrants to negotiate their practices of citizenship and contest dominant representations of immigrants: "their collective claims to urban space are linked to their claims and practices of belonging" (1667). In their work on parades in New Orleans, O'Reilly and Crutcher (2006) argue that parade participants create a visual spectacle in an effort to claim neighborhood spaces as their own: "Bodies in motion, taking up space, 'enact the streets' as though they belong to those parading" (250). The issue of 'ownership' is of particular interest to O'Reilly and Crutcher, and they use Robert Sack's notion of 'territoriality' (Sack 1986) to demonstrate how opposing parade routes mark different territorial claims.

As a material product of consumer culture, cars have increasingly become a focal point of social and cultural research. Scholars have noted the processes by which cars

become cultural markers of individual identity and/or group representation. Identities here are understood not as inherent or essential qualities of individuals, but rather as "projects, emergent features of ongoing social interaction, set within a set of structural relations, formed out of discursive repertoires youth use to make sense of, interpret, and narrate their worlds" (Best 2005, 17). Research in the U.S. Southwest demonstrates how Latino youth engage in the practice of lowriding, a practice that scholars describe as an act of identity formation and community building. Despite, or perhaps as a result of, the popularity of cruising, 'anti-cruising' ordinances have been instituted in a variety of locales to stop the practice.

Contemporary understandings of festivals and public ritual are influenced by Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque. Bakhtin's depiction of medieval carnival - a parodistic spectacle of laughter, mockery and exaggeration - informs more recent academic conceptions of carnival as a form of political resistance. Carnival is described as a means by which marginalized groups claim a space and assert a political voice (Duffy 2000; Waterman 1998). Since at least the 1700s, African Americans in the U.S. have produced festivals that are celebratory and commemorative of significant historical events; by doing so, African Americans stake an active claim in the production of social memory and assert the right to civic space. Another form of public ritual, the parade, is similarly conceived as transformative of urban space. Analysis of parades demonstrates how groups attempt to control representation and produce a sense of community, yet it also reveals how such group representations are contested through intra-group politics of difference.

This dissertation research places Derby cruising within the long lineage of African American urban festivals and explores the extent to which cruising can be understood as a

more recent manifestation of this tradition. By focusing on Derby cruising, this research investigates the practice of cruising among African Americans in Louisville, and it identifies the processes by which cruising serves as an act of identity production and/or community formation. In addition, this research investigates why cruising was perceived by many to be a problem for the city, and explores how the city instituted policies to end the practice. Overall, this project contributes to understandings of car cultures by demonstrating how the spaces of car cultural practices, such as Derby cruising on West Broadway, are both productive of and reproduced by these cultural meanings.

Researching Cultural/Political Geographies

Research for this dissertation seeks to analyze how processes of racialization are deeply embedded in how the spaces of West Louisville and Derby cruising are produced and reproduced. As McCann (1999) argues, the production of space "must be contextualized in the racialized geographies of U.S. cities if it is to deepen our understanding of urban socio-spatial processes" (164). Kobayashi and Peake (2000) define racialization as "the process by which racialized groups are identified, given stereotypical characteristics, and coerced into specific living conditions, often involving social/spatial segregation and always constituting racialized places" (393). However, racialization is more than just a passive act of being coerced into specific living arrangements. It is also important to consider how these racialized spaces are received, altered, and given new meaning by racialized subjects.

Murray Forman (Forman 2000, 2002a, 2002b) has written extensively on how space and place is central to the construction of African American urban – specifically hip-

hop – identities. He writes: "by examining and exploring the multiple articulations of the terms 'the ghetto', 'inner city', and the 'hood', as well as other key spatial configurations that emerge from rap's discourses and hip-hop media generally, the cultural production of urban sites of significance can be illuminated" (2002b, xix). Forman argues that racialized urban spaces of dilapidated public housing and economic depression are reproduced as "central elements of race, class, and cultural identification and recast and revised within a coherent if not entirely consistent spatial discourse, one that relies on the spatial construct of 'the hood'" (xix). This understanding of racialization recognizes the wider societal effects of marginalization, but also acknowledges the contestations and reformulations within this marginalization.

These topics, the (re)productions of place and the processes of racialization, inform the overall research design for this dissertation. This research seeks to elicit information about the spaces of West Louisville and Derby Cruising. In a sense, it explores how the practices of Derby Cruising both make and are remade by the place of West Louisville. An important component of place is the "historical inertia" that contributes to the current conditions. This understanding of place is combined with and complicated by processes of racialization. Following Kobayashi and Peake, the place of West Louisville can be contextualized through the lens of wider societal marginalization; at the same time, following Murray Forman, West Louisville can also be analyzed as a site where this marginalization is contested, reworked, and recast.

The following sections provide definitions and discussions for some of the key geographical concepts to which this dissertation contributes.

Place

Place can be understood for its three dimensions: the physical materiality, the social and cultural location, and the context of place (Staeheli 2003; Cresswell 1996; Gregory 2003; Entrikin 1991). All are understood to be interwoven and part of an ongoing process of social production. In this conception, place is understood to be continually in a process of becoming, rather than as a pregiven outcome. This theory of place accounts for the historical inertia (Harvey 1993) of social and economic relations that constitute a particular location. At the same time, this theory recognizes that despite this historical inertia, places are always contested, open to reinterpretation, and subject to change.

This understanding of place implies a politics of place: "no longer passive, no longer fixed, no longer undialectical – because disruptive features interrupt any tendency to see once more open space as the passive receptacle for any social process that cares to fill it – but, still, in a very real sense about location and locatedness" (Keith and Pile 1993, 5). A politics of place considers how a place is constituted (who and what is included/excluded), how a place is delineated (where and why the borders are drawn), and how a place works unequally to further the political concerns of dominant socio-economic factions (as well as how this process is contested, resisted, and disrupted). As such, the politics of place includes a politics of scale, where geographical scale is the "criteria of difference not so much between places as between different kinds of places…. It is geographical scale that defines the boundaries and bounds the identities around which control is exerted and contested" (Smith 1993, 101).

Doreen Massey (1994), while recognizing the political implications of this scalar bounding of place, cautions against understanding place as insular or reactionary. To the

contrary, Massey argues for a "global sense of place" (156), one that recognizes the interrelations of different types of places at different scales, one that depicts boundaries as always porous, and one that accounts for differences within place. Indeed, as Linda McDowell (1999) reaffirms, "Social distance does not always imply geographical distance, and occupants of the same Cartesian spaces may live in very different 'places'" (5). McDowell furthers this point by arguing that a feminist geography of place should "examine the extent to which women and men experience spaces and places differently and to show how these differences themselves are part of the social constitution of gender as well as that of place" (12). Similarly, considerations of race and place should account for how the "racialization of space" (Delaney 2002; Kobayashi 2004) influences how place is encountered, experienced and negotiated differently according to social and racial positionality (hooks 2009; Delaney 1998).

Identity

For this project, I draw heavily from Amy Best's discussion of identities through her ethnographic research on lowriding in northern California (2005). Best describes individual identities as "projects, emergent features of ongoing social interaction, set within a set of structural relations, formed out of the discursive repertoires (people) use to make sense of, interpret, and narrate their worlds" (17). Identities are produced as people move through and negotiate different sets of social relations. In this way, identities are understood not as "essential qualities of any individual", but as "historically contingent ritual enactments" (17). Indeed, even the more intransigent identities, such as sex and race, may vary across time and space. Furthermore, "identities are not 'attributes' that people

carry around with them in their backpacks but are realized in the practices they take up, the activities that occupy their time, the objects they use, and a complex of relations that organizes their everyday worlds, even if they do not originate in those worlds" (17). Earl Lewis shares in this fluid understanding of identity formation, arguing that the process is "neither linear nor always intuitive. At various times, one part of our identity is struggling to displace another" (Lewis 1996, 126).

Group identities come into being as individual identities are associated into social groups. This process can be individually self-determined and/or attributed upon an individual by another. Isin (2002) argues, "It is through the work of representation that individuals impose their vision of the world or the vision of their own position in that world toward developing their identification with or membership in a group" (28). Isin reminds us that "social groups are not things but relations" (26), and as such, their borders are porous, shifting, and unclear. In addition, like individual identities, "group identifications or affiliations and disassociation or differentiations are multiple, fluid, and overlapping" (28). From a political perspective, social groups have the potential for much symbolic power. "It is the power to make something exist in the objectified, public, or formal state, which only previously existed in an implicit or embodied state; this happens only when the group is named, designated, or selected as such" (29). Valentine (1999) discusses this symbolic power in terms of 'imaginative geographies': imaginative geographies describe how 'nations' are conceived as sharing a collective identity when in actuality most residents of a nation will never meet or know one another. Valentine argues that these imaginative geographies are important in not only how they shape our attitudes toward people and places but also how they influence conceptions of our self and others.

Geographical analyses of social identities are sometimes discussed in terms of social difference. Smith (1999) argues that the construction of difference is always about the exercise of power and therefore an inherently political act. Following the work of Cohen (1993), Smith writes that politics are found in all areas of everyday life, but are concealed within non-political, social, cultural and economic forms. These forms become most apparent through anniversary celebrations that commemorate particular people, places, or events, and Smith argues that such celebrations should be the site through which research should investigate the politics of difference. "By adopting an approach to social research which argues that aesthetic questions relating to taste, style and performance cannot be divorced from political questions about power, inequality and oppression, popular festive forms might be seen to be as central as voting behavior to an understanding of how people make history, geography and difference" (133). In other words, by examining festive activities with respect to their position either in the 'heartlands' or at the 'borders' we can gain access to how identities are contested across space. That being said, Smith cautions against 'over-theorizing' and 'under-specifying' how this process plays out in particular places. As she suggests, "contrasting positioning have a bearing on the production and reproduction of difference, though not always in the way that the currently dominant discourse around cores and peripheries, mainstreams and margins, might lead us to believe" (140).

In discussing representations of sameness and difference, Sibley (1999) argues that psychoanalysis can help reveal the fragmented and distorted spatial meanings that determine conceptions of 'us' and 'them'. Psychoanalytic theories of the self connect the unconscious to the social and material world and help unravel the complex connections

between people and places. Sibley is particularly interested in psychoanalytic theory as elucidated by Melanie Klein: her theory of object relations states that, from an early age, people formatively relate positively or negatively with objects. These relations are internalized, as either good or bad, through a process of introjections. In addition, those qualities that are deemed 'bad' are projected onto others. These process of introjection and projection are of interest to Sibley at the social level, as he argues they create social borders and boundaries - and thusly, geographies of difference.

Representation

Geographers and social theorist alike have argued over the meaning and applicability of the concept of representation. Representational analysis became destabilized by the post-positivist 'crisis of representation'. This so-called crisis arose from the critical and poststructural rejection of a researcher's ability to capture and reproduce an 'objective' truth (Dixon and Jones 1998). According to the crisis, an infinite number of representations can be produced on any given subject – depending on the researcher's individual perspective - all of which are equally valid. This nihilistic perspective leads to a rejection of the usefulness of representation as an analytical concept. Most scholars, however, do not take it this far. Within the field of geography, scholars argue for 'situated knowledges', ones that reflect particular group perspectives while recognizing that these knowledges are both incomplete and subject to change and contestation.

In the field of semiology, representation is discussed as how "human culture is made up of signs, each of which stands for something other than itself, and the people inhabiting culture busy themselves making sense of those signs" (Bal and Bryson 1991,

174). Hall (1997) argues that, culture, itself, is comprised of the production and exchange of meanings. Gillian Rose (2001) elaborates:

> "Those meanings may be explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious, they may be felt as truth or as fantasy, science or commonsense; and they may be conveyed through everyday speech, elaborate rhetoric, high art, television, soap operas, dreams, movies or muzak; and different groups in a society will make sense of the world in different ways. Whatever form they take, these made meanings, or representations, structure the way people behave – the way you and I behave – in our everyday lives" (2).

Because representation is about the production and exchange of meanings, it is also necessarily political. Control over what meanings or representations are allowed to be presented is often a contested issue. In addition to representations produced by dominant groups, marginalized groups create counter representations, "alternative visions to the power of already established discourses" (Slater 1999, 73). In this way, scholars of African American history have noted how urban festivals and public ritual have been used to promote and control group representation (Fabre 1994; Brown and Kimball 1996; White 1996). By this, they refer to African American attempts to present to the public at large a cohesive and positive vision of what it means to be black (Regis 1999). In addition, group representation makes a claim to place, asserts a right to politics, and influences the production of social memory. Even still, group representation is often contested by factions within the group, as dominant factions attempt to control which representations are produced. Recent scholarly work on parades demonstrates the multiplicity of voices that attempt to be heard as part of the group representation - and the politics behind their inclusion or exclusion (Veronis 2006; Marston 2002).

The concept of representation has yet another strictly political definition. In democratic societies, representation refers to the ability of all eligible citizens to have their

voices heard, or represented by vote, in government. Mitchell (1995) writes of representation in this sense, especially as it applies to marginalized or otherwise 'invisible' citizens. Mitchell argues that in order for political movements to be visible to the public, they must be present in public spaces. For this reason, Mitchell describes public spaces as "spaces for representation" (115), spaces where political movements can participate in democratic society. He writes,

> "In public space, political organizations can represent themselves to a larger population. By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups themselves become public. Only in public spaces can the homeless, for example, represent themselves as a legitimate part of "the public." Insofar as homeless people or other marginalized groups remain invisible to society, they fail to be counted as legitimate members of the polity. And in this sense, public spaces are absolutely essential to the functioning of democratic politics" (115).

Public space within the city serves as the grounds where notions of sameness and difference are constructed, where behaviors are normalized or criminalized, and where marginalized groups struggle to assert their right to the city. In turn, however, Ehrkamp (2008) cautions that we must also consider how such public demonstrations are read by others: "Becoming public thus bears the risk of being represented in ways that are different from, and sometimes counterproductive to, the intention of why groups became public in the first place" (120).

Belonging

Belonging here is understood to be both ideological and affectual. It is ideological in the sense that it "connects matter to place, through various practices of boundary making and inhabitation which signal that a particular collection of objects, animals, plants, germs, people, practices, performances, or ideas is meant to be in a place" (Mee and Wright 2009,

772). In addition, belonging is affectual in that it refers to a desire to be associated with a particular place, complete with its physical, subjective, and meaningful connotations, and a desire to secure how this "version of belonging is achieved or maintained" (772).

Hoelscher and Alderman (2004) argue that social memory and social space are combined in the production and performance of identities and belonging, as well as the resulting contestations over such productions and performances. This process is inherently political - it is often used as a tool by dominant classes to reaffirm hegemonic ideologies and inscribe them in material spaces, thusly defining what does and what does not belong (see also Cresswell 1996). However, recent studies have begun to demonstrate how marginalized groups "are becoming ever more adept at making use of memory to challenge their own subordination" (Hoelscher and Alderman 2004, 349). The production of memory and a sense of belonging are often achieved through the landscape: monuments and memorials 'concretize' particular aspects of the past into the present (Dwyer 2002; Alderman 2002; Leib 2002; Trudeau 2006); festivals and rituals enable participants to perform memory and identity through space (Duffy 2000; Fabre 1994; Jarman 1997; Veronis 2006).

Schein (2009) argues for the possibilities of an oppositional politics of belonging, one which can be mediated through land and landscape with the purpose of enabling marginalized groups to assert their right to citizenship and community. This critical understanding of landscape politics argues that senses of belonging are matters of social justice; as such, landscape analyses can do more than just identify social wrongs, they can serve to help alter the material existences for marginalized groups. Schein identifies belonging as potentially operating at different social levels for both individuals and social

groupings (i.e. belonging to place, community, citizenry). In addition, belonging can arise from self-identification or it can be externally imposed as individuals are placed into categories by race, gender, and class. "At the very least, belonging implicates an inside and an outside, regardless of whether each side of the line or the slash is an individual, a category, or a group; and regardless of where the power to define lies" (813). Schein argues that contestations over belonging reveal the "cracks in the mortar", or the ability of oppositional politics to destabilize and de-normalize identity categories and formations. Such contestations, or "tactics of everyday practice" (814), are enacted through land and landscape, and they serve to both assert new conceptions of community and formalize an oppositional politics of belonging.

In a book covering the concept of belonging, bell hooks (2009) offers an introspective journey of her own experiences of place and belonging. hooks describes her childhood in a relatively isolated African American family in rural Eastern Kentucky, and she describes her lifelong journey through institutions of higher learning and the centers of cosmopolitan America. hooks recounts how her journey has brought her back to her roots in rural Kentucky due to a deeply felt sense of place and belonging. Along the way, hooks relates her experiences through the political lenses of race, gender, rurality, and ecology, arguing that "Collective black self-recovery takes place when we begin to renew our relationship to the earth, when we remember the way of our ancestors. When the earth is sacred to us, our bodies can also be sacred to us" (40).

Summary

> "Carnival is a celebration of freedom – yes, but not only or even mostly, individual freedom, but social, collective, national freedom – a liberty that is tenuous, hard-won, and still felt as threatened" (Schechner 2004).

This dissertation is, at its core, about festival, and the literatures reviewed in this chapter explore theories and elements of festival that pertain to Derby cruising. These theories and elements can be organized into five categories:

- Transgression – A festival atmosphere is often celebrated for its transgressive nature, as participants view festival as the one time in the year where 'anything goes.' However, because such transgressions often take place in public spaces, they are also met with caution by authorities who feel the need to tame the crowd. This dissertation combines theories of transgression and festival put forth by Bakhtin (1968) and Stallybrass and White (1986) with the youth and hip-hop festival practices more directly associated with Derby cruising. The nature of transgression and Derby cruising both explains the event's popularity as well as its eventual demise.
- Political Protest – How festival practices are inherently political. The gathering of crowds of people in public spaces is one of the most fundamental components of political activism in contemporary society. The presence of the festival results in heightened visibility, increased media coverage, and a larger audience to which a political voice can be projected. As will be explored in this dissertation, African Americans in Louisville have repeatedly used the Kentucky Derby Festival as leverage to achieve political gains and better living conditions.
- Community Building – While many of these themes have centered more on how festival participants communicate – either directly or symbolically – to the outside world,

this theme focuses more directly on how festival can be a source of community building. At its core, festival is about bringing large groups of people together, and successful festivals harness this power for positive gains. In West Louisville, community leaders built off the success of Derby cruising to produce a more family-oriented and 'respectable' vendor's fair for the community that both bolstered community spirit and brought positive economic gains to the community.

- Identity and Belonging – Festivals ultimately entail notions of identity and belonging. These can be interrogated through the simple analysis of inclusion and exclusion, but they can also be explored in more depth by considering the spaces through which they are produced. For many youthful African American Derby cruisers, the spaces associated with Derby cruising – e.g. West Broadway, the 'streets', the 'hood' – lent an air of cultural authenticity to the events. For those outside this domain, these same racialized spaces reinforced notions of difference.
- Representations of Culture – The most direct source of tension over Derby cruising resulted over concerns about how the events represented the community. The transgressive elements of cruising were a source of concern, not only because of fears that the transgression would spin off into lawless and violent behavior, but also because media coverage displayed the transgressions to a large audience. Derby officials, wishing to maintain control over how the Derby celebration narrative was produced, opposed cruising and left it outside the mainstream.

How the five themes interact, are intrinsically intertwined, and become sources of contestation at festival time constitute the focus of this dissertation. The empirical site of the Kentucky Derby Festival and Derby Cruising in West Louisville provides an opportune

setting for exploring these notions of the affirmation and rejection of the dominant social order. West Louisville – as a place – exists as a physical location (a particular neighborhood in the city of Louisville), as a social and cultural location (often identified by race and class), as a historical location (largely influenced by racial marginalization and segregation), and as a contextual location (the place of West Louisville is attributed with an identity, though the particular traits of this identity vary whether it is internally or externally imposed).

This dissertation follows the arguments of Bakhtin by analyzing the relationship between West Louisville, the Kentucky Derby Festival, and Derby cruising. Bakhtin's analysis situated medieval carnival in opposition to the official feast put forth by the dominant class. Though carnival was a festive time, it also constituted a fleeting opportunity for transgression and resistance against established norms. In this way, medieval carnival always existed as a part of, and yet ambivalently opposed to, the official celebration, generally a religious feast or royal celebration which exerted hierarchical authority over the common people. Carnival offered for the people temporary relief from the prohibitions and restrictions of the official system. In one way, this temporary relief can be interpreted as a "safety valve", whereby societal tensions that have resulted from socio-economic marginalization can be briefly vented through transgressive, but ultimately harmless, performances of resistance. However, festival can also be used by disadvantaged communities as a means of asserting visibility, gaining access to the mainstream, and subverting the dominant ideology, even if for just a fleeting moment. Additionally, as this dissertation will demonstrate, under the right conditions the potential for achieving political change by leveraging the public highly visible nature of festival is real and possible.

Nonetheless, carnival would not exist without the official feast, and the two are intrinsically linked.

CHAPTER 3: PROJECT DESIGN

> "In recent years, there has evolved a need to reassess the role that blacks play not just with regard to the Derby but with regard to the city of Louisville in general… Dignitaries from around the world have traveled to Louisville to witness the Kentucky Derby. But that event has, in addition, become a site where activists as varied as Martin Luther King III, Dick Gregory, and the Reverend Al Sharpton render their various warnings concerning the city's racial climate. The Derby has been turned into an effective platform whereby disenchanted blacks can regularly proclaim the extent to which racism has yet to be overcome" (Saunders and Saunders 2003, 109).

The unifying theme throughout this dissertation is the role of festival spaces in the political and cultural activities of marginalized populations. As a public expression of community values, ideology, or celebration, festival can be a critical medium through which marginalized populations negotiate notions of identity, representation, and belonging. Such negotiations sometimes bring those together with the mainstream and at other times are oppositional in nature, and often a tension within the community exists between the two. Most of the time, oppositional festival practices are characterized by various forms of transgression against the dominant order. In times of crisis, festival spaces can become a venue through which oppositional practices coalesce into a more formalized protest movement. Similarly, for already established protest movements, festival spaces can become a platform upon which greater attention to the cause can be garnered. Because of the popularity of and high visibility afforded to festival performances, well-developed understandings of how these sorts of community representations are negotiated and produced through the festival spaces shed light on the issues with which marginalized populations contend in cities.

These negotiations over community representation can result in tensions at several different levels. At a broad scale, tensions may result between the marginalized community

and organizers of the "official" festival over what constitutes acceptable festival events. Such tensions are oftentimes representative of the politics within the city and reveal the dynamics of power between different factions. Within marginalized communities, tensions may also result over control of how representations of place, identity, and belonging are produced. These tensions may be reflective of existing divides within the community along such lines as race, class, gender, age, place, or something more particular to a specific setting. In such situations, the debate may be centered on whether festival spaces should be used to promote a positive community representation or whether they should be used as a site for displaying oppositional or transgressive practices. For those who do wish to promote oppositional activities, there is another tension involving the extent to which festival is a strategic venue for protest. There is a fine line between using the heightened visibility associated with festival to build up momentum for protest and overplaying one's hand and the protest movement fizzling out once festival time has passed. This dissertation explores the extent to which these oppositional festival practices can produce real change and benefit to the community; but it also highlights the limits to how much change and how much benefit can be achieved.

In examining these processes as they are constituted through festival spaces, this dissertation presents an historical geography of the African American community in West Louisville. The city of Louisville exists as a compelling case study for examining the ongoing evolvement of race relations between whites and blacks because of the many juxtapositions it represents:

- The city is often described as a "Midwestern" city despite its location within the "Southern" state of Kentucky

- Since at least the early 1900s, the Louisville African American community has maintained a strong political voice in city affairs, yet the city also became a stronghold for ex-Confederate leaders after the Civil War
- The city long had a reputation for having a more "progressive" attitude toward race relations, nonetheless the urban form is distinctly segregated with some economically marginalized neighborhoods being almost entirely populated by African American residents.

Throughout this dissertation, the term "West Louisville" will be used as representative of the African American population of Louisville. This is not to imply that all of Louisville's African American residents live in West Louisville, though West Louisville is nearly entirely comprised of African American residents. Because of the significance of West Louisville as being home to the largest numbers and concentrations of African American residents as well as being historically home to the most significant African American economic and cultural districts, it is the area upon which this dissertation most heavily focuses.

This dissertation examines the historically fractured relationship between African Americans in West Louisville and the Kentucky Derby Festival. African Americans have long understood the Festival for its political significance and not as merely a cultural affair. This should not, however, be interpreted as a dismissal of the cultural implications of the festival. Rather it is an understanding that there is always a political component of cultural affairs, as is there always a cultural component of political affairs. This point is particularly salient here in that interpretations of the political or cultural significance of particular events in particular places can often become a source of contestation.

Through this lens, this dissertation examines how the relationship between African Americans and the Kentucky Derby Festival has been mediated through the spaces of West Louisville and/or the Festival. Three distinct periods, or flashpoints, constitute this historical geography:

1. Open housing protests in 1967: Though African Americans in Louisville had achieved several notable civil rights victories in the 1950s and 1960s without significant conflict, the issue of open housing became a serious source of contention and attracted national attention. This dissertation demonstrates how African American protestors utilized the Kentucky Derby Festival to ramp up pressure on the city and project their voice to a wider audience.
2. Police violence protests in 2000: In the wake of several incidents of police violence toward African Americans in Louisville, protests erupted in spring of 2000. Utilizing lessons learned from the open housing protests of decades ago, protestors again seized upon the Kentucky Derby Festival as a venue for increasing leverage against the city to respond to their demands for reform.
3. The establishment and eventual ending of Derby cruising from 1998 to 2005: As West Broadway cruising on Derby weekend arose and grew in popularity, it became an unofficial Derby festival event that was ambivalently both a part of and yet apart from the official Festival. For many African American youth, cruising became the medium through which transgressive and/or oppositional identities, oftentimes associated with hip hop culture, were expressed. For other African Americans, cruising became an opportunity to promote community-building and project a positive representation of the West Louisville

community. The location of cruising on West Broadway, as the main thoroughfare through the neighborhood, afforded the events greater accessibility and cultural "authenticity," as understood by participants.

On one level, the controversy over and ending of Derby cruising revealed cultural and aesthetic differences between those who participated and those who controlled the official Kentucky Derby Festival. Undoubtedly, this was not a level playing field. The Derby Festival was a government sanctioned organization that drew in millions of dollars every year through the Festival events, whereas Derby Cruising was a spontaneous and purposefully unorganized event that operated outside of, and according to some in opposition to, the Derby Festival. Even among African American residents of West Louisville, difference played an important role, and once again, the playing field was far from level. Many West Louisville community, business, and religious leaders were also opposed to Derby Cruising. Their ability to control and define representations of West Louisville was challenged by the events, and it is the nature of this contestation with which this dissertation is concerned.

As a qualitative geography project, this dissertation explores how the spaces of West Louisville were imbricated in the performances and understandings of Derby cruising and the wider Derby Festival. This chapter identifies some of the broader methodological issues of this dissertation, and discusses how potential problems and pitfalls of the project's design were addressed through the research and analysis. As part of this project's design, several specific methods were deployed, including interviews, newspaper/media analysis, and archival research. The purpose for and execution of each of these methods is discussed, with the findings from these methods serving as the basis upon which this dissertation was

produced. This includes a discussion of researcher positioning and reflexivity, focusing on how these affect the knowledge produced through this work.

Methods Deployed

As a cultural geography project, this research seeks "to understand the ways in which meaning is constituted in particular situations" (Shurmer-Smith 2001b, 97). Meaning is understood here as historically and culturally situated and as being socially constructed through language and other signifying systems (Locke 2004; Shurmer-Smith 2001a). Uncovering these meanings, or 'situated knowledges' (Mansvelt and Berg 2005), is accomplished through the employment of qualitative methods (Bennett, Ekinsmyth, and Shurmer-Smith 2001). For this research, a variety of "interconnected interpretive methods" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, 19) were used to gather and analyze the multiple meanings ascribed to Derby cruising. The multiple methods served as a process of 'triangulation', where inferences from each of the data sources were checked and analyzed in relation to one another (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). The methods were designed to be both theory-based and theory-informing, in that "the processes of framing and reframing the research question, sample selection, data gathering, data analysis, and theory construction occur concurrently" (Kuzel 1992, 40). In this way, conducting the research required a "willingness to remain open to experiences in the field and to reconsider continually our theoretical presuppositions" (Herbert 2010). The following sections describe the structure and deployment of these methods.

Interviews

The in-depth interview (Bernard 2006; Esterberg 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Denzin and Lincoln 2000) was a central component of this research project. For this

type of research, interviews are invaluable to the extent that they are designed to "explore and understand actions within specific setting, to examine human relationships and discover as much as possible about why people feel or act in the ways they do" (McDowell 2010). For this project, interviews were semi-structured; that is, they were organized around "ordered but flexible questions" (Dunn 2005, 88). The interview questions sought to elicit information regarding individuals' behaviors or practices, feelings, opinions or values, observations, and personal background (Patton 1990) as they related to Derby cruising. Interview subjects were chosen by purposeful selection (Maxwell 2005), a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to acquire the necessary information for answering the research questions. Through purposeful selection, I identified three general groupings to define research subjects: Derby cruisers, West Louisville leaders, and city/Derby Festival officials. Although the types of questions asked varied somewhat depending on the individual interview subject, the questions all sought to elicit information regarding the identities, spaces, and representations produced through Derby cruising.

As was expected going into this project, gaining access to interview subjects proved difficult. Several strategies were deployed to overcome this difficulty. One was to cold-call or email West Louisville community and business leaders to introduce my topic and request an interview. This method proved somewhat successful, as about half of the interviews were set up this way. Nonetheless, the response rate was fairly low, as only about one in five responded to my initial contact. A second strategy was to encourage the establishment of "gatekeepers" for this project. Gatekeepers are defined as those "who have the power to enable or withhold access to people or situations for the purposes of

research" (de Laine 2000, 123). Gatekeepers can help the researcher 'get a foot in the door' by identifying and providing introductions to potential research subjects (Duneier 1999). Because relying on gatekeepers as a primary source of interview subjects can be problematic (Leonard 2007; Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert 2008), I also managed this concern by snowball sampling, or "using one contact to help you recruit another contact, who in turn can put you in touch with someone else" (Valentine 2005, 116). This strategy was also somewhat successful, as several more interviews were arranged in this manner.

In all, fifteen personal interviews were conducted for this dissertation. The average length of the interviews was approximately forty-five minutes, with several exceeding well over an hour and one or two being twenty minutes or less. The specific setting for each interview varied considerably, though most took place somewhere in West Louisville. Specific settings included the respondent's office or place of work, respondent's home, fast food restaurants, coffee shops, and community centers. Two interviews were conducted by telephone. All interviews except one were recorded using a digital voice recorder. The sole exception was an interview with a police representative who finally returned my calls after weeks of trying. I was out of town and at a conference at the time of the phone interview and did not have the voice recorder with me. In lieu of recording the interview, I took notes as detailed as possible given the circumstances. The police representative declined to meet in person.

Table 3.1: Demographic breakdown of interview subjects.

	Race	Gender	Age Group	Socio-econ.	Relation to cruising
Interview 1	Afr. Amer.	Male	Under 30	Working	Cruiser
Interview 2	Afr. Amer.	Male	30-44	Working	Organizer
Interview 3	Afr. Amer.	Female	30-44	Professional	Resident
Interview 4	Afr. Amer.	Female	45-59	Professional	Resident
Interview 5	Afr. Amer.	Male	45-59	Professional	Organizer
Interview 6	Afr. Amer.	Male	Under 30	Working	Cruiser
Interview 7	Afr. Amer.	Female	Under 30	Working	Cruiser
Interview 8	Afr. Amer.	Female	30-44	Professional	Official
Interview 9	Afr. Amer.	Male	60 or over	Professional	Resident
Interview 10	Afr. Amer.	Male	30-44	Professional	Cruiser
Interview 11	Afr. Amer.	Male	30-44	Working	Cruiser
Interview 12	Afr. Amer.	Male	45-59	Professional	Official
Interview 13	Afr. Amer.	Male	60 or over	Working	Resident
Interview 14	Afr. Amer.	Male	45-59	Working	Organizer
Interview 15	Afr. Amer.	Female	60 or over	Working	Resident

It is useful to consider the demographics of the participants. By race, all fifteen interview respondents were African American. By gender, ten were male, and five were female. By class, which I very loosely define as ‘working’ or ‘professional’, eight respondents were what I would consider working class and seven were what I would consider professional class. The age group distribution was fairly even, though because I did not ask the respondents their age, there is a bit of guesswork involved here. Three were aged below 30, five were aged 30 to 44, four were aged 45 to 59, and three were aged 60 and up. A final demographic, so to speak, category I include here is whether or not the respondent personally was involved in Derby cruising, either as a participant, organizer, or implicated official. Of the respondents, ten were and five were not. Of those who were not, all either lived or worked near West Broadway, and were thusly affected by Derby

cruising even if they themselves did not participate. All digitally recorded interviews were transcribed for analysis. The transcriptions were then coded (Cope 2005, 2003) according to themes of relevance for this dissertation. This process entailed two steps. First, open coding, involved intense reading and analysis of the transcripts line by line with an emphasis on detecting common themes or categories of interest (Esterberg 2002). In this research, transcripts of interviews with Derby cruisers were coded according to themes of race/racialization, cultural politics, practices of Derby cruisers, interactions with the police or authorities, debate over cruising's ending, implications for West Louisville, and others. The second step was to develop these themes by analyzing and comparing all of the coded transcripts together to identify common emerging themes. One example of a common emerging theme through the interviews was the notion of whether or not Derby cruising should be considered a "cultural" festival. This theme is explored further in Chapter 7. In keeping with Institutional Review Board protocols, the anonymity of all respondents is maintained throughout this dissertation, and any specific identifying information from the interview transcripts has been removed.

Media

Because Derby cruising was a public event that generated considerable controversy, the events were covered heavily by the local media. Media coverage, or "news discourse" (van Dijk 1988), is significant for its rhetorical effectiveness at presenting accounts of events in a manner that suggests 'factuality'. In this way, news discourse influences the ways in which people encounter spaces and places (Shurmer-Smith 2001c). Analysis of media representations is not uncommon in cultural geography. Indeed, Susan Ruddick (1996) argues that "analysis of the media is a critical tool" in

understanding how media representations "reaffirm constructs and images of subject and object" (139). In this vein, geographers have included media representations in analyses of the racialization of place (Alderman 1997; Ehrkamp 2008) and public ritual and the politics of difference (Marston 2002).

Several media sources, primarily newspapers, were examined for this dissertation research. The first is the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, the largest newspaper and only daily circular in the city. Researching and gathering information from the *Courier-Journal* was accomplished in three ways, and at different stages of the research. Early on in the project in 2011, a search of the *Courier-Journal* was conducted through the University of Kentucky online digital collection. For this search, keywords of "Derby cruising" were used, yielding a total of 267 results. Of these, 155 were of relevance to the research (there were also a number of 'false hits', as the word cruising was also associated with results from horse racing, such as "the horse cruised to the finish"). Subsequent searches involved specific topics related to Derby cruising for entry into the database, including "Citizen Review Board," "Derby City Ambassadors," and others. Results from these searches moved to usable total of articles nearly up to 200.

The online digital collection was limited in that it only dated back to 2003. To gain access to articles prior to 2003, the microfilm collection of the *Courier-Journal* at the University of Louisville library was searched. For this search, each edition of the newspaper from every Derby week from 1996 to 2003 was searched for any mention of Derby cruising. This search yielded 30 articles, the first one appearing in 1998. An additional search was conducted to find articles related to police protests of spring 2000 and police violence from 1999 to 2002. This search yielded an additional 43 articles. The

microfilm collection of the *Courier-Journal* at the University of Kentucky Library was also searched for the months pertaining to the open housing movement of 1967, from January through June. This yielded an additional 59 newspaper articles that helped inform research for Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

The second media source used in this research was the *Louisville Defender*, an African American weekly newspaper that was founded in 1933. Microfilm records of *The Defender* were searched at the University of Louisville library for the years between 1999 and 2006 when Derby cruising was ongoing. The primary coverage of Derby cruising found in this newspaper was during the controversy over the ending of Derby cruising in 2005 and 2006. During this time, the newspaper conducted a reader survey regarding the community's opinions of Derby cruising and the city's ending of the events. This survey and its results, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 8, were informative in understanding community perceptions of Derby cruising for this research. A second search of *The Defender* found 33 articles pertaining to Derby cruising, police protests and/or police violence from 2000 through 2003.

A final media source utilized was the *Louisville Eccentric Observer* (*LEO*), an alternative weekly newspaper in the city that covers cultural and political issues of significance in the city. The *LEO* was particularly helpful in that it included opinion columns and debates over the meaning of and controversy over Derby cruising in the mid-2000s. These columns also helped illuminate the many differing opinions held by residents in the city toward the events. In all, 11 articles from *LEO* were included in this research.

Archives

Archival research (Roche 2005; Ogborn 2003; Hannam 2001b) proved to be a useful source for data relating to the history and governing of Louisville. Information gleaned from archival sources was beneficial to the extent that it helped: (1) construct a history of African American settlement in West Louisville; (2) contextualize the Derby Festival and its relation (or lack thereof) to West Louisville; (3) and provide official documents pertaining to the passing of the 'no-cruising' ordinance. All research involving archival data should be conducted with a critical eye (Black 2003). Archives are produced within their own uneven set of social relations (Kurtz 2001; Hannam 2001a), and sometimes what is missing is as important as what is present (Hanlon 2001). Nonetheless, archival sources can help provide unique insight into past events, as was the case in this research.

One archive accessed to obtain sources was the Filson Historical Society located in Louisville. The Filson contains publicly available primary sources through its Special Collections and secondary sources through its Library. Primary sources for historical information regarding the early days of the Kentucky Derby and the associated Festival were found here, including official Kentucky Derby Festival programs from the 1950s through 1970s. The Filson also holds both primary and secondary sources on the early days of Louisville, and in particular, the history of African Americans in West Louisville. A second archive accessed was the University of Louisville Library, which contains two Special Collections of relevance for this research: *the Granville A. Bunton African American Collection* and the *Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research*. Sources from these collections were instrumental in researching the history of protest involving the

Kentucky Derby Festival. Secondary sources, in the form of books and historical accounts of events related to this project, were also obtained from the Louisville Free Public Library and the University of Kentucky Library.

Researcher Positioning

For this type of research project, it bears worth exploring some of the concerns regarding the relationship between 'researcher' and 'research subject' that have been brought to the forefront of qualitative research within the discipline of Geography and beyond. At the core of this discussion is the acknowledgement that all knowledge is situated, not universal, and is produced through uneven fields of socio-economic relations. As such, it is necessary for the 'researcher' to acknowledge his/her positionality within these fields of social relations and try to offer some degree of reflexivity in the process of producing knowledge about the 'research subjects'. Along with this discussion of positionality comes issues of insider/outsider: in what ways do the researcher's position as an insider or outsider in relation to the group of research subjects affect the production of knowledge. In the following pages, these issues will be explored in depth in order to discern the possible ways in which they affect this research on Derby Cruising in West Louisville.

My position as researcher within this project is something that requires some examination. Positioning the knowledges produced through my research entails critically examining the relationships between me, the researcher, and the research subjects (Haraway 1991). As Rose (1997) explains, "when situating knowledge it is crucial to consider the role of the (multiple) 'self', showing how a researcher's positionality (in terms of race, nationality, age, gender, social and economic status, sexuality) may influence the

'data' collected and thus the information that becomes coded as 'knowledge'" (308). As a quick snapshot at detailing my positioning, it is helpful to place myself within the research. I grew up in Louisville, though I have spent the majority of my life living elsewhere. Despite being a Louisville native, many of my identifying characteristics position me as an outsider to West Louisville. These include my race (white), socio-economic status (middle class, educated), and experiences (grew up in the East End and was fairly unfamiliar with the West End).

The controversy over Derby Cruising was intriguing to me in how it reveals the deep socio-cultural divides within the city of Louisville. During the course of this research, whenever anyone spoke of cruising, they spoke with a deep emotional investment in one side or the other of the issue. In describing the events, difference was often constructed along lines of race and socio-economic status. As a scholar influenced by Critical Race Theory (Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Kobayashi 2004; Price 2009), I grapple with the fact that my research may indeed merely reify these perceived racial differences. Nonetheless, through my research I hope to highlight the many different and interlocking social axes of identity/difference that constituted Derby Cruising, including race, but also including gender, class, place, age, and so forth. From my analysis, I hope we can better understand the significance of the events as well as the implications of the city's ending of the events.

From this brief narrative about my own position within – and my motivations for – this research, I can begin to reflect on how my positioning affects the methods I carry out and the situated knowledges I (co)produce. Like positionality, reflexivity is a vital aspect of the research process. For my purposes, there are two types of reflexivity to consider: personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. Personal reflexivity involves

"reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research" (Willig 2001, 10); it also entails considering how the research process, itself, has or will change us. Epistemological reflexivity "encourages us to reflect upon the assumptions (about the world, about knowledge) that we have made in the course of the research, and it helps us to think about the implications of such assumptions for the research and its findings" (10). Reflexivity requires that we pay attention to the 'context of discovery' through which the research takes place, and it requires that we acknowledge the ways in which social meaning is co-produced by the researcher and research subjects. Reflexivity is a powerful tool; however, as Gillian Rose reminds us, it is not a panacea: "The research process is dangerous. It demands vigilance, a careful consideration of the research process: another kind of reflexivity, in fact, but one which can acknowledge that it may not be adequate since the risks of research are impossible to know" (Rose 1997, 317).

In the field of ethnic and racial studies, debates over the significance of positionality are sometimes couched in terms of 'insider' and 'outsider'. According to this thinking, the researcher's positioning may be either 'inside' or 'outside' of the research subjects' group positioning, and this status of insider/outsider greatly affects the ability of the researcher to adequately carry out the project. To address this issue, some have called for racial or ethnic 'matching', i.e. making sure the interviewer and interviewee share the same racial/ethnic identity: "closeness of identity and, in particular, shared racial identity is generally presumed to promote effective communication between researcher and subject and, conversely, disparate identity to inhibit it" (Rhodes 1994, 550).

While acknowledging the significance of insider/outsider statuses, many have criticized the theory for conceptualizing group identities in terms of absolutes (Gunaratnam 2003; Twine 2000). As Aguilar (1981) argues, "all sociocultural systems are complex. Many societies are fragmented by class, regional, urban-rural, and ideology related affiliative differences and all cultures are characterized by internal variation… Despite this, the extreme arguments both for and against insider research rest on an implicit model that characterizes all researchers as either absolutely inside or outside homogeneous sociocultural style" (25). Importantly, these claims do not state that race and ethnicity are insignificant; rather, they argue that race, ethnicity, and many other social axes of difference intersect and interlock in multiple and sometimes unknown ways. While every attempt should be made to reflexively account for racial and ethnic differences through the process of conducting and interpreting the interviews, these differences do not automatically negate the ability of the researcher to effectively carry out the project:

> "The views of both insider and outsider must be accepted as legitimate attempts to understand the nature of culture. We would argue that drawing from contemporary perspectives on insider/outsider status, that in the course of a study, not only will the researcher experience moments of being both insider and outsider, but that these positions are relative to the cultural values and norms of both the researcher and the participants" (Merriam et al. 2001, 415).

This issue of insider/outsider certainly seems to be relevant to my research in West Louisville. I am white; most of the research subjects for this project are black. It has been argued elsewhere that "black people's mistrust of white people in general will... be extended to the white researcher or interviewer, preventing access or, if access is obtained, distorting the quality of communication which ensues" (Rhodes, 548). My experience in conducting the interviews for this project yielded considerably different approaches and different results from interview to interview. Perhaps this should have been expected, but

it is still interesting to reflect on how these differences manifested in the responses I received to the interview questions. For some respondents, the issue of race was front and center to the discussion on Derby cruising. For others, the issue of race rarely came up, and when I tried to push the issue, the respondents gave casual or dismissive mention to race. Interestingly, one respondent in acknowledging the role of race in how the police handled Derby cruising, commented almost incredulously, "And this is the twenty-first century!" For this particular respondent, the fact that race still did matter seemed odd and almost anachronistic.

The role of gender in conducting these interviews is also of interest to explore, particularly as it relates to sexuality. Derby cruising was sometimes a lurid affair. For most of my interviews, I tried to interrogate the role of gender in understanding how Derby cruising was performed. For many respondents, both male and female, this was an uncomfortable issue to discuss. I think this is because of the highly charged sexual connotations which were fairly or not associated with Derby cruising. One respondent, who had been heavily involved in cruising the 1990s, described going back to West Broadway in the mid-2000s, just to experience the scene once again. He mentioned bringing along his young son with him to see everything. I found this curious, knowing that he also had an older daughter, and so I asked him if there was any particular reason why he brought along his son and not his daughter. He looked at me like I had two heads, as if to imply he would never want to expose his daughter to the scene down there. Another respondent, a mother who lived nearby West Broadway, told a story of learning about Derby cruising by overhearing a conversation between her adolescent son and his friend. She was shocked and repulsed by the things she overheard the two describing they had

seen in broad daylight. These anecdotes demonstrate some of the difficulty I had in broaching the issue of gender, as respondents often immediately associated the subject with the sensitive issue of sexuality and Derby cruising. Much of this sensitivity, I believe, can be related back to concerns over representation - representation of Derby cruising, representation of West Louisville, and representation of black Louisvillians. Concerns over my status as an outsider, a white academic, and concerns over how I might represent the community in my work, undoubtedly had at least some influence over how respondents answered my questions. Nonetheless, nearly every participant seemed candid, forthright, and genuine in their responses, and most if not all expressed appreciation at being able to divulge their feelings and opinions on the Derby cruising controversy.

This discussion of positioning and reflexivity should help contextualize the findings presented in this dissertation. My positioning as an academic inherently affects the product, as I am able to set the agenda, control the final product, and come and go as I please (Staeheli and Lawson 1995). However, simply contextualizing the research does not entirely remove these concerns. "Recognizing or even being sensitive to these power relations does not remove them. I would even argue that adopting the role of a supplicant may make it too easy for the researcher to submerge the instrumental and exploitative elements of participant observation beneath a wave of altruistic intent. Fieldwork is inherently confrontational in that it is the purposeful disruption of other people's lives" (England 1994, 85). In addition, no matter how critical I may try to be in analyzing and interpreting the results of my study, in the end, this project primarily serves my own interests in writing a dissertation, and it only tangentially provides benefits to the community I am studying.

Summary

> "Appreciating and understanding space's constitutive role is no simple matter. Besides engaging in long acquaintance with those who build, inhabit, and control a space, the qualitative researcher must translate everyday events into some larger understanding of social and spatial relations. This necessarily involves interpretation. The cultural significance of a given social act is often not obvious. With extended exposure and ongoing reflection, the qualitative researcher can make confident inferences about what a particular social behavior means to the members under study. Daily experience is interpreted against some broader understanding, and this understanding is used to evaluate experience, in an ongoing, recurring process. The researcher becomes a research instrument, and uses his or her developing cultural consciousness to better understand the group in question." (Herbert 2009).

The research methods detailed above provided the necessary information for addressing this dissertation's primary objectives. In speaking directly to Derby cruising participants, organizers, and neighborhood residents, sufficient information was obtained to analyze the multiple meanings associated with Derby cruising. These methods also yielded significant information regarding the spaces of West Louisville with a particular emphasis on issues of race and class. What results is an historical geography of the place of West Louisville, and, in particular, its relationship to performances of festival, protest, and transgression. Newspaper accounts of the events divulge how representations were produced in the media, and also offer the 'official' narrative of how events transpired. Finally each of these methods shed light on the cultural politics of difference that led to conflict and controversy among Louisville residents over what Derby cruising meant and represented for individuals, the neighborhood, and the city at large.

CHAPTER 4: THE KENTUCKY DERBY FESTIVAL, WEST LOUISVILLE, AND THE ORIGINS OF DERBY CRUISING

This chapter details the historical, economic, and cultural significance of the Kentucky Derby Festival for Louisvillians and demonstrates how the Kentucky Derby Festival is central to the identity put forth by city boosters to demonstrate the economic vitality of the region. Second, this chapter examines the historical time periods through which the Kentucky Derby and the associated Kentucky Derby Festival originated in order to help explain how the events have come to be held with such prominence by the city, but also held with disregard at times by some of the city's African American residents. Both the Festival and the associated horse race developed at particular times in Louisville's history where segregation and marginalization were the established, and sometimes legally enforced, practices. As such, African Americans in West Louisville developed in some ways separate and unique traditions for celebrating Derby outside of the official or mainstream. Additionally, there resulted an underlying tension between wanting to celebrate Derby as a Louisvillian yet understanding that exclusion and marginalization were part of the African American experience of being a Louisvillian. Third, this chapter explores the origins of Derby cruising to set the stage for a deeper discussion of how Derby cruising became established on West Broadway each Derby weekend and became a significant point of both pride and contestation in the city. Derby cruising arose in the mid-1990s among African American youth in West Louisville as a way to celebrate the Derby in a way that was both ambivalently a part of and yet also opposed to the wider Kentucky Derby Festival.

The Kentucky Derby

The first running of the Kentucky Derby, at what would eventually become known as Churchill Downs, was in 1875. But horse racing had existed in the city long before then. The first recorded mention of horse racing in Louisville was in 1783 on Market Street (Ruby 1957). In these early days, horse racing was considered to be hazardous for pedestrians and other traffic, so many municipalities outlawed horse racing on city streets. In response, horse racing associations began springing up to organize the sport at dedicated race tracks. By 1822, the Louisville Jockey Club was established and was publicizing three days of fall racing (Thomas 1995). Through the mid-1800s, horse racing in Louisville was a popular but not well-organized activity. In the 1820s, horse races were held at the Hope Distiller Course at the foot of Sixteenth Street (Ruby 1957). From the 1830s through the 1850s, horse racing shifted to the Oakland Race Course at Seventh and Magnolia (Ruby 1957). After this track closed, the Woodlawn Course in St. Matthews, which is today a suburb east of Louisville, held races in the 1860s, with the exception of the Civil War years (Thomas 1995). This track did not last long, though, and races were subsequently held at the short-lived Greenland Course in the early 1870s (Thomas 1995).

In response to the continual shifting and uncertainty associated with the organization of horse racing in the city, a prominent Louisvillian, Meriwether Lewis Clark, planned to establish a more permanent home for the sport. ML Clark was the grandson of William Clark (of Lewis and Clark Expedition fame), and his great uncle was George Rogers Clark, the original city founder of Louisville. The horse industry in Kentucky at the time was competing for notoriety with horse racing in the northeast, particularly New York and New Jersey (Wall 2010). The Saratoga Race Track in upstate New York was becoming

the primary center of horse racing, while horse farms in New York and New Jersey were outpacing Kentucky's horse industry. A Louisville newspaper remarked "It has seemed very strange to many visitors that a city as populous and prosperous as Louisville has no drive, and no place of resort where owners of horseflesh could reap so much pleasurable enjoyment and at the same time promote various interests of the city…" (quoted in Thomas 1995, from the "The Park Association", *The Daily Louisville Commercial*, June 7 1874).

To try and stem the tide of the horse industry's losing ground to New York, ML Clark traveled to England to discern how the horse racing industry operated there, with hopes to transport some of the ideas back to Louisville. Upon his return, he arranged to lease land at the edge of the city from two of his uncles, John and Henry Churchill (Saunders and Saunders 2003). The first racing meet held at the new track was a six-day event, with the feature race being one that was modeled after a race that had particularly impressed Clark on his European trip, the Epsom Derby, which was established just outside of London in 1780 and still runs today. The inaugural race in Louisville was at first called the English Derby, before later being changed to its current name, the Kentucky Derby (Ruby 1957). Also at this inaugural six-day event, Clark established the 'Epsom Oaks' - now known as the Kentucky Oaks, and the St. Leger Stakes - now called the Clark Handicap, renamed after its founder; both of these races have continued to the present in Louisville.

The first running of the Kentucky Derby in 1875 was held before a grandstand that held about 3,500 people. Including spectators in the infield, about 10,000 people witnessed the first race. A horse named Aristides was the winner, earning its owner $2,850. The racetrack and its signature race gained in popularity, and by 1882, the grandstand was

extended to hold 8,000 people. It was the largest grandstand in the country at the time (Puckett and January 1985). The name 'Churchill Downs' was coined for the track somewhere around 1886. In 1894 the iconic Twin Spires were erected as a part of a new grandstand that was constructed. The early 1900s saw continued expansion of the track's seating capacity due to the race's popularity. By 1920, continued construction and renovation of the grandstand expanded seating capacity to 50,000 people. In 1925, local radio station WHAS aired the first live broadcast of the race over the radio waves; an estimated 5-6 million people tuned in. The increased national exposure of the Derby led it, along with the Preakness Stakes in Baltimore and the Belmont Stakes in New York City, to become known together by 1930 as the Triple Crown of horse racing in the U.S. In 1952 the first live national broadcast of the race on television was produced, though it had also been broadcast locally on television since 1949 (Puckett and January 1985).

As the popularity of the Kentucky Derby continued to increase over time, its status as the premier sporting event in the state was solidified. Today the horse industry is one of the most significant economic drivers in the state. According to the Kentucky Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, the horse industry has an economic impact of approximately $4 billion annually (KYHBPA 2012). The state's tourism industry, which emphasizes the horse industry as its signature promotional attraction, is also estimated at $10 billion annually. With estimate annual cash receipts of $950 million, the horse industry totals higher, in terms of dollars, than all other agricultural products in the state. Nearly 100,000 people are employed either directly or indirectly through the horse industry. The thoroughbred industry in the state derives its wealth and status from the multi-million dollar

industry of horse racing and breeding (Roberts and Schein 2013). Overall, five thoroughbred horse racing tracks exist in the state, including Churchill Downs.

The Kentucky Derby Festival (KDF)

> "Like measles and flu, Derby fever is highly contagious… It's old stuff to Louisvillians, so how come we sniff the electricity in the air and succumb to the magic every year? As others greet each other with "Merry Christmas" in December, why is "Happy Derby" a standard hello in May in Kentucky? Why do we knock ourselves out baking country hams, doing up the best linens and replanting the garden at the last possible minute? Why do we cry like idiots when "My Old Kentucky Home" heralds the race? Put your finger on it if you can. Others have tried and failed. The one sure thing is that it strikes every spring, and though you put your head under a blanket and try to avoid it, you can't resist. No cure is in sight." (Caldwell 1973).

The Kentucky Derby Festival was originally started in 1935 as a week-long endeavor. This early version of the Festival included a concert, fireworks show, boxing matches, and a showcase event Carnival Night Parade that was held on Fourth Street the night before the running of the Derby. "Never at any other time during the year does Louisville witness such a crowd as this on her downtown streets… The Festival boasts that it has been successful in getting 40% more visitors into Louisville one day ahead of time as compared with pre-Festival years" (*Courier-Journal*, as quoted in KDF 2004, 43). This early version of the Festival only lasted three years, as the Great Flood of winter 1937, the worst in Louisville's history, devastated the city. On January 27th, 1937, the Ohio River crested at fifty-seven feet, which was eleven feet higher than the previously recorded highest level. In one night between the 21st and 22nd, the river level rose six feet. An estimated seventy percent of the city was underwater, and 175,000 people were forced to evacuate their homes (Sander and Conner 2008). The flood, combined with the ongoing Great Depression of the 1930s, effectively ended any hope of continuing the Festival after 1937 for nearly two decades.

In 1955, discussion for a Derby Festival began resurfacing, led by the efforts of four Louisvillians: Addison F. McGhee, Ray Wimberg, Basil Caummisar, all of whom were prominent business leaders in the city, and Earl Ruby, who was the sports editor for *The Courier-Journal* (Runyon 2013). As the idea gained steam, it was enthusiastically supported by the city's mayor, Andrew Broaddus (Schroeder 1973). The idea for the festival was to include more participation from city residents in the Festival, as well to attract tourists to visit the city. "Up until that year (1956) Louisville was a quiet place at Derbytime. Sure, the papers brimmed with stories of horses, celebrities and millionaires here for the weekend, and lavish parties for the rich. It was a very exclusive world. While there was another Derby going on, about 700,000 Louisvillians were having just another day. It was a frustrating state of affairs" (Schroeder). The Derby sought to include larger segments of the community within official Derby celebrations aside from the traditional neighborhood or back-yard parties that had grown in popularity throughout the city (Schroeder 1973).

With cooperation from city leadership, the Kentucky Derby Festival was established as a private nonprofit organization. An executive board for the Festival was formed and consisted of the four original founders as well as other prominent city leaders and boosters. For the inaugural year, the Board named as Chairman Robinson S. Brown, grandson of the founder of Brown-Forman Corporation, a Louisville-based company that is one of the world's largest in the wine and spirits business. Brown, who was an executive with Brown-Forman, also later served as the president of the Louisville Chamber of Commerce.

Initial plans for the Festival envisioned a week-long series of events that would attract visitors from all over, similar to that of Mardi Gras in New Orleans (KDF 2004). The Pegasus Parade would be the showcase event of the festival, and it would be modeled after the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade that accompanied the annual Rose Bowl college football game in Southern California and Miami's Orange Festival that accompanied the annual Orange Bowl college football game in Florida (Owen 1978). One of the advocates, *Courier-Journal* sports editor and Festival co-founder Earl Ruby, wrote in February 1956, "Another effort is being made to provide a full week of fun for Kentucky Derby visitors. The first try, was born a quarter century too soon, say fathers of the new plan. This time the festival will succeed, they promise" (quoted in KDF 2004, 41). The Kentucky Derby Festival began with a single event, the Kentucky Derby Festival Parade on May 3, 1956. The parade consisted of thirty-five floats and twenty-three bands and operated on a budget of just six hundred and forty dollars. Nonetheless, the initial parade, held on Broadway, was a huge success, and plans were made to expand the Festival the following year (KDF 2004).

> "Even from the beginning, the Kentucky Derby Festival helped put Louisville and Jefferson County and this area on the map as a tourist attraction, and that brings money into the community. It's like seeing your children grow… I feel proud of my little part in the festival in its early stages" (Robinson S. Brown, KDF Board Chair, 1957, as quoted in KDF 2004, 14).

In 1957, the Festival expanded to a week-long host of activities. These included the Kentucky Derby Open, a Professional Golf Association (PGA) tournament event at the city-owned Seneca Park Golf Course, music and fireworks leading up to the Coronation Ball of the Kentucky Derby Queen, the Phillip Morris Country Music Show at the newly constructed State Fairgrounds, the Kentucky Derby Sports Car Road Race, also to be held

at the Fairgrounds. The events were touted in the first ever Souvenir Program for the Festival:

> "Derby Time is festival time . . . It is a ball . . . It is gala . . . It is fun. However, some people don't like horses, which is alright, because some people don't like ice cream. Still everybody likes to have fun and to be gay. Last year, the first Pegasus Parade was launched on Thursday night before Derby day and 125,000 persons lined the parade route to see the event. This year, the Pegasus Parade has been expanded to a week-long Festival and home-folks, who mostly stay home to let the visitors use the Derby seats, can have their own little show of a variety of entertainment features" (KDF 1957).

As the KDF's popularity grew each year, it soon became recognized across the country as an established and noteworthy festival. By 1973 the Festival was recognized as one of the nation's ten most significant annual events by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (Schroeder 1973). By 1977, the Festival was being advertised as "largest civic celebration in the United States" (Owen 1978).

Today, the Kentucky Derby Festival is one of the most important economic and cultural celebrations in the city. Each year, the two-week festival draws an estimated 1.5 million people to the seventy officially recognized events, with an annual economic impact on the city exceeding $127.9 million (KDF 2011). The economic impact continues to grow, and the 2012 numbers represent a thirty-six percent increase over the 2001 estimate of $93.6 million, or an annual growth rate of about three percent.

The importance of the Kentucky Derby Festival also extends to the high class and prestige associated with the Derby. The events attract celebrities, political dignitaries, and business elites from around the world to congregate at exclusive black-tie parties and experience the horse race on Millionaire's Row. The national, and even international, media are on hand to cover the race and celebrate the "sighting" of various celebrities at the race and its associated parties. With such a global audience, the Derby offers an annual

window for the city to represent itself as a culturally vibrant place that would be an attractive site for capital investment. Indeed the Metro Chamber of Commerce touts the Kentucky Derby Festival as an example of how "Louisville is a place that embraces the quality of life as well as the quality of doing business" (Greater Louisville, Inc. 2007).

The Derby Festival is always evolving, with new events being added and less popular events being dropped each year. However some events are cultural staples and have become traditions on upon themselves. Some of these more popular and well-known Festival events include:

- Thunder Over Louisville: Considered the Derby's Festival's Opening Ceremonies, the air show and fireworks display is held exactly two weeks prior to the running of the Derby. With average attendance topping over half a million people, Thunder is considered the largest attended annual single-day event in the southeastern U.S. (KDF 2004). Its estimated economic impact is over $56 million annually (KDF 2011).
- Pegasus Parade: The parade was the first event ever held for the Festival in 1956, and it has been held every year since (except one) along a 1.7 mile stretch of Broadway between Campbell and Ninth streets on the Thursday before the running of the Derby. The parade averages 2,500 participants and attracts crowds in excess of 200,000 people each year. The parade's economic impact on the city is estimated at over $22 million annually (KDF 2011).
- The Great Balloon Race: Held every year since 1973, weather permitting, the Balloon Race features fifty hot air balloons and attracts upwards of 30,000 spectators (KDF 2004). The race is preceded the night before by the Balloon Glow, which has attracted

more than 70,000 spectators in a single night (KDF 2004). The two events combined account for over $5 million annually in economic impact (KDF 2011).

- The miniMarathon: The miniMarathon has been held has been held since 1974, with more than seven thousand runners competing each year in the half-marathon (13.1 miles) race. In 2002, a full Marathon was also added, featuring just over two thousand runners. The combined economic impact of the two events is estimated to be just under $5 million annually (KDF 2011). Additionally, race participants are encouraged to raise awareness and funds for a number of recognized charitable organizations.

Aside from these long-established events are a number of other events taking place throughout the two weeks. These include the Great Steamboat Race, the Chow Wagon, the Run for the Rose, the waterfront Fest-a-Ville, the Derby Eve Gala, and many others.

> "What connects all these events are freedom and fun – freedom from the shackles of winter, and the fun of finally being outdoors. But if the EPA found horses cause cancer, if OSHA decided jockeys take an unacceptable risk and the sport of horse-racing were banned – Louisville would still have to have a Derby Festival. It has become a rite of spring, a chance to get out and be part of a community that has too long been shut up indoors." (quoted in KDF 2004, 37).

As these quotes suggest, the Kentucky Derby and associated Festival have become sacred traditions in the city, and in becoming so, an entire cottage industry has sprung to capitalize on various traditions associated with the events (Brodowsky and Philbin 2007). The race has been given a number of slogans, including "The fastest two minutes in sports," "The most exciting two minutes in sports," and "The run for the roses." The first two refer to the approximate duration of the race, the latter to the "Blanket of Roses" that is draped over the winning horse in the Winner's Circle immediately after the race. The Mint Julep, made with Kentucky bourbon, is touted as the official drink of the Derby. And to be sure, gambling, drunkenness and debauchery are unofficial traditions for some of the thousands

of spectators who attend the event in the infield. For those of higher status and wealth, there is the grandstand, and for the truly elite, there is Millionaire's Row, a celebrity and aristocratic mingling of America's upper class. And of course, television cameras always focus in on spectators shedding a tear for the singing of "My Old Kentucky Home", the Kentucky state song, shortly before the race begins.

The depictions above present the Kentucky Derby and Festival as they are officially recognized by the city and many of its residents. Because of the economic and symbolic importance of the events to the city, it is imperative for city leaders to promote the events in a way that magnifies the majestic, nostalgic, and unique character of the events. One might suggest that maintaining this imagery of the events is essential to preserving the tradition.

KDF and West Louisville

> "Kentucky, racehorses, and Southern colonels just seem to go together naturally. Whether picturing Bluegrass horse farms or their close relative, the Kentucky Derby, many of us cannot summon one of those images without calling up all three. The goateed colonel holds the dominant position in the landscape of imagination that defines this central portion of Kentucky" (Wall 2010, 1).

The sentiments presented in this quotation are akin to those often used to portray the centrality of the horse industry to the self-imaginings of Kentuckians. This dominant narrative links the horsing industry and, in particular, the Kentucky Derby, back to Kentucky's "genteel" Southern roots. The narrative is decidedly Anglo-centric, especially as it pertains to the imagery of the "Southern colonels." This iconic imagery extends across the rural landscape, particularly over the wealthy horse farms of the Central Bluegrass (see also Roberts and Schein, 2013). This includes scenes of rolling hills, rock walls, horse farms, and extravagant horse barns. In Lexington, advertised as the "Horse Capital of the

World", the horse industry is celebrated symbolically in the landscape through the installment of dozens of artistically designed horse statues in along the streetscape throughout the city. In Louisville, the Twin Spires of Churchill Downs are a widely recognized and represented element of the city's landscape.

According to Wall (2010), the narrative of the Kentucky Derby and the thoroughbred industry as being intrinsically "Southern" in nature is one that was carefully crafted by Kentucky's horsing industry. Wall argues, "money began to flow into Bluegrass Kentucky only after both locals and outsiders embraced a popular plantation myth that gave the region a neo-Southern identity. Ironically, this occurred some thirty-five to forty years after the end of the Civil War and the disappearance of the Old South. Bluegrass Kentucky's new identity had fortunate economic consequences, as it negated the region's notorious reputation for violence and lawlessness, thus bringing business to horse country" (3). As will be further explored in the next chapter, the state of Kentucky was in a period of flux after the Civil War. Though the state had never seceded with the Confederacy, the abolishment of slavery after the Civil War led to considerable unrest, particularly in the countryside where newly freed African Americans were harassed and run off the land by mobs of whites. Competition with the Northern based horsing industry led Kentucky's horse farms to recreate a new identity for the industry in the state, one that hearkened back to the Antebellum years. Wall continues

> "this altered (Southern) identity excluded African Americans from participation in the new horse industry… The neo-Southern image was a cleverly crafted picture, situating the Bluegrass within an Eden of smoothly operating plantations where the horses ran fast, the living seemed ideal, and all African Americans occupied servile positions of offering juleps to the colonels as the white folk relaxed in the shade of columned mansions. This picture grew in direct contrast to the highly visible sphere that blacks had

> occupied as star athletes of the sports, some, like the jockey Isaac Murphy, becoming wealthy in the generation following freedom" (3).

In the early years of the Kentucky Derby, African Americans played a prominent role in the race. The first horse to win the Derby was ridden by Oliver Lewis, an African American jockey. This should not come as too big of a surprise considering that thirteen of the fifteen horses in the original race were ridden by black jockeys. "By 1875, there was even more prestige associated with being a jockey, but a prestige accorded to black jockeys within the context of a segregated world that still viewed blacks generally in the lowest terms" (Saunders and Saunders, 6). In these early days of horse racing, though jockeys could gain some prestige by winning races, they were still assigned the menial tasks involved with the day to day upkeep of the animals and farm. Of the first 28 Derby winners, 15 were ridden by black jockeys. However, as new and more Jim Crow laws became pervasive around the turn of the century, the role of African Americans in the Kentucky Derby diminished significantly. Some black jockeys were harassed or attacked by white jockeys as a result of competition for jobs and general racism, and the Ku Klux Klan reportedly gave death threats to some of the more successful black jockeys (Winkler 2009). After 1921, no black jockeys even participated in the race for the next 80 years (Aubespin, Clay, and Hudson 2011). This erasure and absence of African American presence in the Derby was indicative of wider societal forces to enforce Jim Crow segregation throughout the South.

By the time the Kentucky Derby Festival originated in the 1950s, segregation and economic marginalization toward African Americans had become the standard, and oftentimes legally enforced, practice. A couple of quotes from two older black residents interviewed for this dissertation speak to this:

> "And we didn't worry about going to no racetrack, because the racetrack was segregated. So we had our own Derby."

> "Well, there was a "white man's Derby" and there was a "black man's Derby". It's always been segregated because we was always the servants on Derby. That's when blacks made their money. Because we were always in the servants position. It probably goes all the way back to slavery. So the white folk had their parade. But it always stopped right there at the white folk neighborhood. There's a lot of racial (over)tones that goes way back."

In this quote, the spatiality of the Pegasus Parade is mentioned as reflective of the racial overtones of the Derby Festival. Each year, the Pegasus Parade is held on East Broadway, moving westward from Campbell Street across downtown and ending at 9th Street. That the parade ends at 9th Street is significant, given that the '9th Street Divide' is a term often used to differentiate the largely African American neighborhoods of West Louisville from the city's downtown.

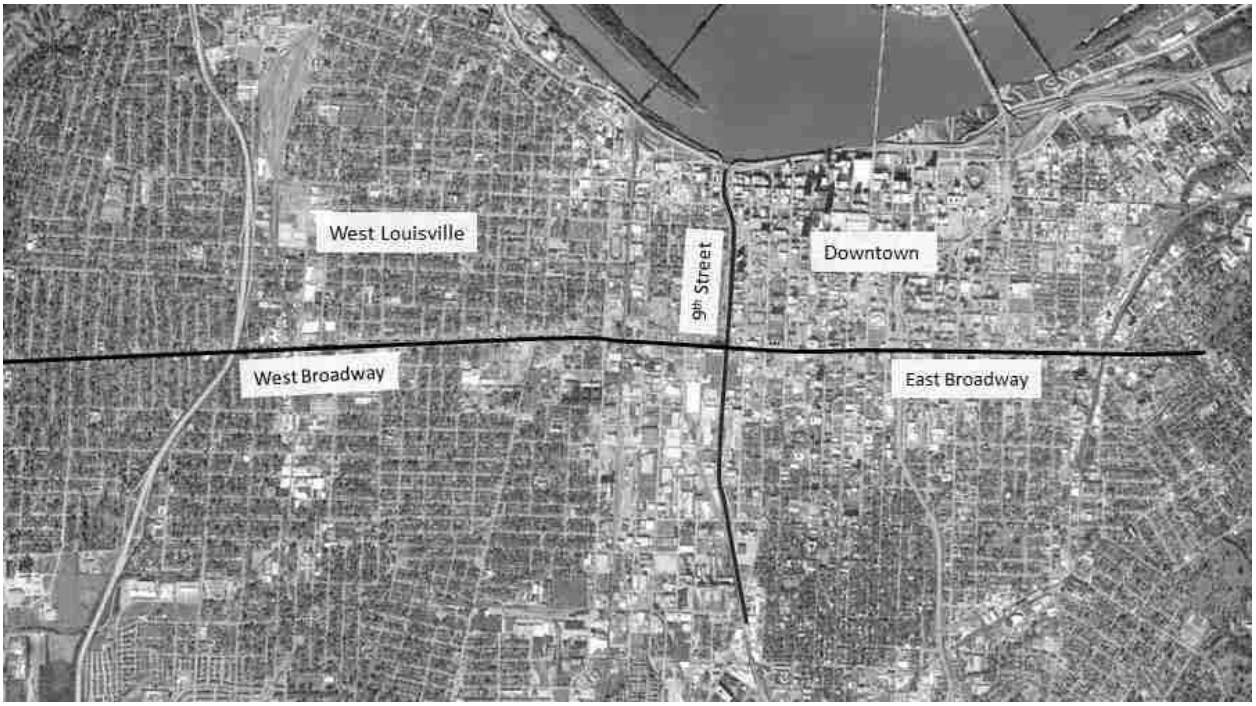


Figure 4.1: Map of the 9th Street Divide that delineates West Louisville from downtown. The Pegasus Parade is held annually on East Broadway, ending at 9th Street. West Broadway was the primary site for Derby cruising.

Still, the relationship between the Kentucky Derby Festival and the West Louisville community has improved somewhat in recent years. Along these lines, several officially sanctioned KDF events have been established that cater specifically to the city's African American residents. These include:

- The Grand Gala: an official KDF party that invites a number of prominent African American celebrities, athletes, artists, and dignitaries to mingle and interact with Louisvillians, particularly the city's black upper class. Recent attendees include Jamie Foxx, Michael Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal, Julius Irving, Ken Griffey Jr., Robert Griffin III, and many others.
- 100 Black Men of Louisville Derby Gala: an event which also caters to Louisville's black middle and upper class. The event's proceeds go toward funding academic scholarships for aspiring black students.
- TheSlice of Louisville: Described as featuring "Spice, Style, and Soul", this event highlights culinary dishes prepared by chefs and caterers in the city's West End and beyond. The event also includes live music in the form of jazz, blues, and R&B.

As became apparent through interviews for this dissertation, many African Americans' attitudes toward the Derby and Festival remain ambivalent. Among black Louisvillians, feelings may range from total disregard of the events altogether to taking great pride in being a Louisville citizen and recognizing the significance of the events. Most respondents wavered between these two extremes. Most, if not all, respondents stated that they appreciated Derby time in general and wanted to celebrate the events in some

way, even if that particular way may be opposed to the 'official' way celebrated by the city. A few comments from respondents illustrate these sentiments:

> "I think that people were working to have a variety of ways for ordinary people simply to enjoy Derby who didn't have a lot of money. For some people their Derby, notice in the West end, people barbecue in the front yard and not in the back yard. That's a cultural thing where people can converse with people walking up and down the street and see people they know. It's a way to relate to people in the same way that in a lot of times in the street in the West End, people who know each other, or say a residential street, if they drive past each other they will stop each others cars and simply engage in conversation. You'll see people engaged in conversation on the front porch to somebody sitting in a car. These are all community things that exist in the West end. Customs may have existed in other parts of the city but have kind of gone out of fashion as people in other parts of the city put their patios in the back of the house and moved to suburbs without sidewalks. There's a very real community sense down here in the West end that in some other parts of town has become obsolete, or evolved out of existence."

The comments here present a neighborhood-centric understanding of Derby celebrations in West Louisville. This respondent mentions class, referring to people who "don't have a lot of money," up front to differentiate between how people celebrate Derby. The respondent also brings in geography, comparing the West End to the suburbs, and implicitly race by saying "that's a cultural thing" to emphasize how Derby celebrations differ in West Louisville. The respondent also uses space, differentiating between front yard and back yard settings, to indicate cultural differences between how people grill out and celebrate Derby in the West End as opposed to other suburban locales in the city. This respondent feels that grilling out in the front yard leads to more spontaneous and organic interactions between neighbors and passers-by, and in effect results in more of a sense of community.

> "Those that organize the Grand Gala, which is where a lot of black celebrities come to town, and some of prominent folks in Louisville are invited to the Gala, and they have the ability, or money, or the class background, to sort of float in that community, I think for them, that was a way to get integrated into the Derby festivities. Certainly some African

> Americans go down to the track to watch the horse race. It's not like it's completely segregated. Louisville is a city divided as much by race as it is geography; where you live. We're also talking about a community where a significant amount of the population does not have private transportation. So for many making it downtown to the Chow Wagon, they might make down there but it is much easier to do a neighborhood barbecue or a neighborhood event."

This respondent also speaks directly to the influence and interactions of race, geography and class in understanding how Derby celebrations are performed. The respondent mentions the Grand Gala event, as well as the presence of a small number of African Americans who do attend Churchill Downs for the Derby, to emphasize that the KDF is not entirely segregated, particularly for those African Americans who have the means to afford attending such events. Nonetheless, for the majority of black West Louisvillians who do not have such spare income, yet alone "private transportation" as the respondent points out, more localized Derby celebrations are more appropriate, such as neighborhood barbecues.

> "I do think there's been an effort of the Derby Festival Committee over the past several years to try to work in West Louisville to be a part of… I remember when Carol Clay was chairman of the Derby Committee… I thought well here's somebody who's really aware, somebody who can really bring the black community more in and make some of these events part of the official Derby events… The Grand Gala, I thought, was just, and I'm not going to say it was a stroke of genius… but when Charlie Johnson and company came up with the Grand Gala, I thought I'm so glad somebody is doing that. Because there is a market for that. African Americans like to dress up and be part of a Derby event. 100 Black Men is an official event… These are events that, part of the black community is involved in, but there's still a segment of the community that kind of has to make their own."

This respondent echoes some of the sentiments spoken before by mentioning the Grand Gala, as well as the 100 Black Men event. This respondent also emphasizes the desire among African Americans to "dress up and be part of a Derby event", reinforcing a sense of pride in being a Louisville resident and hosting the KDF.

> "I guess the official Derby activities is not attractive for certain youth of a large segment of the community. They say go to the Kentucky Derby, well not everyone can afford to go to the Oaks or the Kentucky Derby. So what are the other activities you have? There are certain other activities I guess that don't really attract the urban market, so whether there should be within the Derby committee someone who would have more activities that really fit the urban market rather than just traditional mainstream market which I guess is what the Derby is really organized to be."

Whereas the previous commenter seemed to speaking for more middle and upper class black Louisvillians, this respondent seems to be speaking more for working class or "urban" black Louisvillians. This respondent also brings in the issue of age, or generational differences, in explaining perceptions toward the KDF. Interestingly, this respondent also indicates that such "urban" understandings of Derby celebrations may exist outside of the "traditional mainstream". This suggests that for younger and urban black Louisvillians, their preferred form of celebrating Derby may subvert, or at least run counter to, "what the Derby is really organized to be".

> "For the public, for the residents around there, they didn't want to be part of Derby no more. I mean Derby has its own crowd. Derby has people that go to the track and that's what they wanted it to be. And when you think of Derby and going to the track, black people it's just not something they wanted to do. They didn't want to be at the racetrack. I mean I've been here all my life and never gone to the Derby, never even thought about going to the Derby."

For this respondent, the Derby itself plays a minimal role in creating an identity as a Louisville resident. This respondent differentiates between the "residents around there," meaning West Louisville, and the "Derby crowd" by explicitly stating that West Louisvillians do not want to go to the track, and even if they did, the "Derby crowd" does not want them there anyway. This respondent also calls upon his own experiences as a lifelong Louisville resident to reiterate that attending the Derby has never once even been a consideration.

Taken together, these comments illustrate the variety of perceptions held by black Louisvillians toward the KDF. The comments begin to suggest some of the differences that help account for these variety of perceptions, such as race, class, geography, and generational differences. African Americans who have the means may be more likely to appreciate Derby as a city-wide celebration, a chance to showcase the city to a national, or even international audience. For more working class or "urban" black Louisvillians, participation in official KDF sponsored events is less likely. This is particularly true because of the lack of effort on the KDF's part to offer events either located in West Louisville or appealing and advertising to West Louisville's African American residents. One respondent spoke of the presence of the KDF in West Louisville,

> "No, no presence at all in West Louisville. I don't think so at all. I don't think any community group that I know, I've been very involved and active since I've returned back to the city, and I have not known the Derby Festival reaching out to any group outside of when they did the block party for two years. Other than that, I don't think there's anything of that nature. I think it really has even decreased."

With the KDF demonstrating little initiative to integrate West Louisville residents into the official Derby celebration, the scene was set for West Louisvillians to put on a new type of "unofficial" Derby party. The largest, and most controversial, of these celebrations became known as Derby cruising. The following section will explore the origins of Derby cruising, both within the historical context of automobile cruising in the city at large, and also more specifically within the context of African American celebrations of Derby in West Louisville.

Origins of Derby Cruising

Like most other cities in the U.S., automobile cruising has likely taken place in Louisville for about as long as cars have been around. In the 1950s and 1960s, white

teenagers cruised downtown and around various hang out spots, particularly the White Castle on Broadway. In the mid-1980s, residents in the Hikes Point area, a suburban locale southeast of the city, complained about teenagers cruising on weekend nights. The situation escalated a bit, and the Board of Aldermen pledged $5000 toward increased police presence to monitor the situation *(The Courier-Journal* 1985). In the early 1990s, cruising became a nuisance for suburban residents along Preston Highway, a major artery south of the city. The *Courier-Journal* reported 70 citations issued - mostly to teenagers and young adults - for loitering during one particular July weekend in 1991 (McCormick 1991). Preston Highway cruising increased in 1992, with estimates of 700 cars cruising along a mile-and-a-half section of the road on weekend nights, especially during the summer months. Residents complained about the traffic gridlock as well as the loud "boom boxes" blasting music from the cars. Cruising became so popular here that one car audio magazine even referred to Preston Highway as "Boomer's Lane" (Kaukas 1992). In neither of these cases did the situation escalate into any significant problems. The increased police presence and monitoring eventually whittled down the numbers of participants, allowing the situation to diffuse and eventually fade away as youth found different outlets for their energies.

Cruising has also been a tradition within many of the public parks in Louisville. In Iroquois Park, a major public park in south Louisville, the road to the top of the park (a popular destination spot - especially for teenagers - as it overlooks the city), was closed indefinitely in 1980 to automobile traffic because of problems with cruising on the weekends. The road remained closed for over eleven years before being reopened in the early 1990s and rerouted as a one way street (Powell 1991). Cruising has also been a tradition for many years in two major parks in West Louisville, Shawnee Park and

Chickasaw Park. The *Courier-Journal* reported problems with Shawnee Park cruising in 1989; on summer weekends police would sometimes be called in to restrict entrance to the park in order to relieve congestion within the park and on its roadways *(The Courier-Journal* 1989). One interviewee described these events,

> "When I was in high school, the thing to do was to cruise Shawnee Park. Girls, I mean we would cruise for so long and then we would park and we would sit on the car and just watch. And it was just the most fun thing. I mean some of my fondest memories were waiting for a car full of guys that you wanted to cruise by, you know, just to see who was there, "hey how are you doing!" It was just fun for us. But there was not a lot of chaos. People did just that, they'd cruise. They didn't really stop, they'd cruise. And if they wanted to stop and talk to you, they cruised around again and they pulled over."

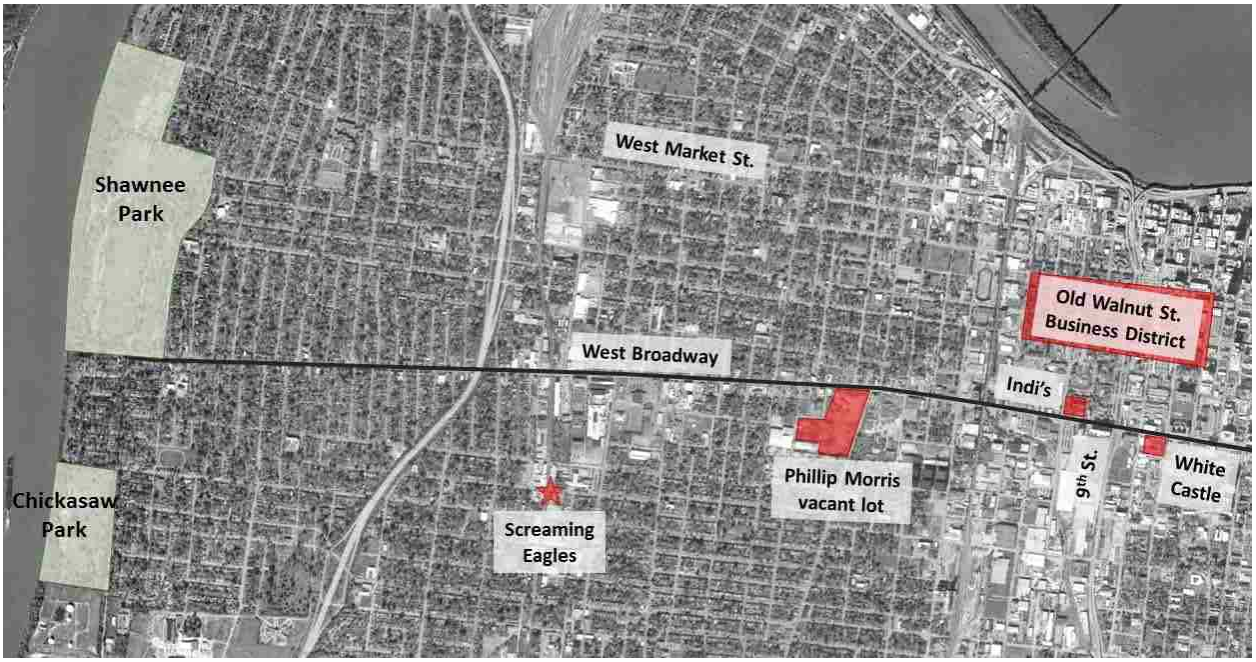


Figure 4.2: Map of Derby cruising's origins. West Broadway bisects the West End, with the parks to the west and downtown to the east.

The tradition of cruising in Shawnee Park may be at least partially implicated in the origins of Derby cruising on West Broadway. One of the primary entrances to Shawnee Park lies at the end of West Broadway at Southwestern Parkway. Some have suggested

Derby cruising as having spawned from spillover traffic trying to enter the park on Derby weekends. A resident explained,

> "Basically it was just kind of an informal event that the youth in this city, definitely in West Louisville, kind of congregated on Broadway. I would say definitely after the closing of Broadway's Roller Rink, and many of the teen and youth activities closed in the neighborhood, people just pretty much began to gather around. First it became Shawnee Park, Shawnee Park actually was kind of the initial place where people would gather on Saturdays and Sundays. Used to be the place where people would do that. And then it initiated from Shawnee to Chickasaw, so cruising actually became just between those two parks, between Shawnee and Chickasaw, and then during the night, as people began to go out for the evening, Indy's and White Castle was kind of one of the locations for it. So I guess you had your east end location at White Castle and then the park. So that's pretty much how it became Broadway cruising. Because people were coming from the park, and coming down Broadway and really trying to find places to eat actually. So that's pretty much how it expanded from the parks and onto Broadway."

The West Louisville tradition of cruising on Derby weekend, however, predates these more recent accounts. An older African American resident described how, as far back as the 1940s, she and her friends would cruise through the Walnut Street business district - the now defunct African American business district in West Louisville - on Derby weekend. She described:

> "We would all get ready for the Derby. Every bar, grill, food place was all stocked well. And we would take our cars, and we would line up at 6th Street. 6th and Walnut. And we would go all the way down to 13th. That was the end at the Top Hat and a good steak house called Betty's. We had it. We done lost it. We would cruise Walnut Street. Walk it and drive it. This was in the fifties and the forties. It started around 1944, '45. Cause my brother was a young man then, he was 18 and getting ready to graduate from Central High School. They would cruise down Walnut Street. Beautiful cars. And believe it or not, they had a trolley that went down the middle of Walnut Street. But it didn't bother them because of the traffic jams. No police blocked. The only police you would see were the black police, that had no authority to block anyone but the black folk. But they never did that to their own folks. We would line our cars up, and cruise Walnut Street. Walnut St. then wasn't one way. So you had one lane coming west, and one lane coming east. So it would start on Friday, Derby Eve. That's when the parties would get started. The parties would go all

> night long. Thursday night, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. And Sunday night, after the last concert at the Top Hat, that's when it would ease down. The top musicians in the country would come there and perform. The white folk put the cruising (label) on it. Because, as long as they said, we stayed in our place, the place they gave to us was Walnut Street, from 6th all the way down to 13th or 15th. That was our place. We didn't get our of our little box. We didn't worry about going to 4th Street, as they called it then. We had our good times, and the businesses were all black businesses."

As will be further explored later in this dissertation, the Walnut Street business district alluded to in this quote was leveled by the city as part of the dubiously labeled "urban renewal" campaigns of the late 1950s and 1960s.

Another popular explanation for the origins of Derby cruising is that it manifested from the annual Screaming Eagles Derby party at 29th and Kentucky Street - just a few blocks off West Broadway. Screaming Eagles, a black motorcycle club that was founded in the city in 1958, has an annual Derby party has been a popular tradition in West Louisville for decades. Another older West Louisville resident explained the significance of Screaming Eagles:

> "Before cruising, they would go down to the Screaming Eagles motorcycle club. And the motorcycles would race. And that was like the motorcyclist's Derby. And they would have Screaming Eagles, where they drink. And then on Sunday, after they slept, they would go out to Newburgh and have the races at the National Guard. That was tradition. That was back in 1959. Even the police, the guy who worked on the police motorcycles, the police would let them bring the police motorcycles out. They would have slow drag. They would have tricks. That was an unofficial event on Derby. And they have for years had vendors set up. And that's how we made our money. The whole week we accommodated the Derby. And every club was full. The prostitutes made money. The coke dealers made money. The hustlers made money. The churches made money the next day, folk would come to church because mom and them made money selling cakes, candy, popcorn. Even the whole black community, like I could set up a hot dog stand. Because the whole community became a business."

Some have suggested Derby cruising originated as youth sought to expand the party away from the Screaming Eagles bike club. A younger resident described his memories of the early days of cruising:

> "So we were always around Screaming Eagles, because growing up, that's what we knew. We'd go down to Screaming Eagles (for Derby); we'd be downtown. So eventually cruising became, know what I'm saying, everybody would just come down on Broadway, and it was just a big parking lot. I don't know why they called it cruising, because it was a parking lot. You'd get on Broadway and expect to be there for six or seven hours. Don't go down there thinking you're gonna whiz through there. You'd go out and see girls. Things going on…"

In the early days, Broadway cruising was not the spectacle that Derby cruising eventually became. It mainly consisted of youth congregating in vacant or available lots, looking to celebrate the holiday in some small way. As police would run them off from one lot, the youth would simply re-congregate at a different lot. As the activity's popularity widened, it became increasingly accompanied by a parade of cars, sometimes displaying artistically elaborate paint jobs, expensive rims and other accessories, and, of course, loudly blaring hip-hop music. Each year, the number of people going to West Broadway for Derby weekend steadily increased. By the mid-1990s, the event had gained more attention from the police. In 1997, police attempted to block traffic from moving westward on West Broadway, but this plan was soon abandoned as it created more problems than it solved. In 1998, police restricted access to Shawnee Park; those cars that were allowed in were forced to leave the other exit soon after. Also by 1998, the event had grown large enough to get its first of many write-ups in the *Courier-Journal* (Ward 1998). Such early media accounts described the traffic congestion and included quotes from both "church-goers", as they were described in the newspaper article, who were concerned with the growing traffic and crowds, as well as other residents who appreciated the festival-like atmosphere created by the growing congregation (Ward 1998).

By 1999 Derby cruising was reaching new levels of popularity. Perhaps it was the beautiful weather that Louisville experienced that Derby weekend, or perhaps it was the

increased exposure Derby cruising was receiving to African American audiences in the region - most likely some combination of both - the thousands of revelers that descended on West Louisville for Derby cruising in 1999 caught city officials “off guard” (Carter and Edelen 1999). To relieve traffic congestion, police officers rerouted thousands of vehicles back onto I-65, regardless of their intended destination. Shawnee Park was closed to automobile traffic to discourage people congregating there. Despite the increased number of revelers and the unpreparedness of the city, few major problems outside of traffic congestion were reported, although “dozens” were arrested for violations related to disorderly behavior, alcohol intoxication, and drug possession (Baldwin 1999).

The huge increase of the crowd size on Broadway in 1999 led to cruising being understood by the city to be a significant ‘unofficial’ Derby Festival event. After 1999, the city began devoting significant resources, especially in the form of police monitoring and traffic controlling, to West Broadway for Derby weekend. The local media began covering the scene on West Broadway with increased attention, to the point that the activities on West Broadway were the first story to be covered on the news after coverage of the actual horse race was complete. With this increased media coverage came increased exposure of Derby cruising to other city residents, and those outside the city as well. African American cruisers, pleased with the increased notoriety of the events, planned bigger and better parties for the weekend. For the first time in the history of the Kentucky Derby Festival, West Louisville had become ‘the place to be’, particularly for younger African Americans, on Derby weekend.

Summary

The Kentucky Derby and associated Derby Festival are among the most important events for the city of Louisville, KY. From an economic standpoint, the events have an estimated economic impact of over $127 million and draw approximately 1.5 million visitors to the city over the two weeks. This income generated from tourism is vital for area hotels, restaurants, and other related industries. The city is also able to bolster its image, or at least highlight its attractions, to the national and even international media that are on hand to cover the Derby. From a cultural standpoint, the Derby Festival attempts to bring together multiple segments of the Louisville community through the many and diverse Festival events to bolster civic pride.

Despite these successes, the KDF has not traditionally been received with overwhelming enthusiasm by African American Louisvillians, particularly those residing in the city's West End. The historical time periods within which the Kentucky Derby and the associated Kentucky Derby Festival respectively developed likely have contributed to this negative perception. By and large, the Derby and Festival originated as segregated events, catered to and produced for white Louisvillians. For the Derby, it came about shortly after the Civil War, at a time when there was great unrest and uncertainty regarding the extent to which newly freed slaves would be incorporated into the white socioeconomic mainstream. As will be explored a bit further in the next chapter, Kentucky's unique role in the Civil War also played an important role. Some have commented that Kentucky did not join the Confederacy until after the Civil War. In other words, it was not until after the war that Kentucky began to assume a more Southern identity. Along these lines, as Wall argues, the state's horsing industry gained status and popularity by realigning itself away

from the traditional (Yankee) power brokers of the north and shifting toward a newly created "genteel" southern plantation identity. With this new identity came the entrenchment and reinforcement of unequal race relations, relegation to African Americans to segregated and economically marginalized conditions and opportunities. In the big picture, the Derby became associated with the "southernness" of Kentucky, and this has greatly affected to the day how the Derby is viewed by both whites and blacks in the city.

The Kentucky Derby Festival came about in the 1950s at about the same time the battle for Civil Rights was beginning to come to the forefront for Kentuckians and Louisvillians in particular. With the post-World War II economic boom and the rise of the white middle class, the KDF quickly became a source of civic pride for Louisvillians. From the city's perspective, the KDF and the Derby became economic drivers for the city, bringing in substantial money and attention from the outside. The Derby became the social event for the city. During this same time period, African Americans in the city were fighting for equal rights and opportunities within the city. Indeed, during the post-World War II economic boom of the 1950s that helped inspire the resurrection of the KDF, segregation and marginalization was the norm. The fight for Civil Rights and equal opportunities and equal access to employment and housing was just beginning to make headway.

With this understanding of the Kentucky Derby Festival established, the following chapters will explore cases where African American residents used the festival as a platform for resisting or transgressing the dominant social order. The next chapter examines the history of African Americans in West Louisville to investigate how particular historical, cultural, and economic conditions and events have helped shape the present. As

Cummings and Price (1997) argued, “The history of Blacks in Louisville must be understood in light of its unique history and development as a city” (642). This chapter examines how African Americans in West Louisville have historically utilized the cultural and economic cache of the Derby Festival to leverage against the city demands for better conditions. In particular, this chapter delves into how the Kentucky Derby Festival became the focal point of the Civil Rights movement in Louisville, and how African Americans in the city used the festival to their political advantage.

CHAPTER 5: PROTEST AND THE DERBY FESTIVAL PART I - THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

African Americans have always had a strong presence in Louisville since the city's founding in 1778 by George Rogers Clark. The city's location at the Falls of the Ohio River was especially significant pre-Civil War, as the river marked the boundary between the slave state of Kentucky and the free states of Indiana and Ohio. This location led to cities like Louisville becoming important gateways of the Underground Railroad to the free North (Frost 2006). Over the course of the 1800s, Louisville industrialized quickly in part because of its strategic location along one of the major inland waterway shipping routes in the U.S. As such, the African American population in Louisville remained strong, and by 1900, the city was the sixth largest in the U.S. in terms of African American population (Allman-Baldwin 2002). Within Louisville, African Americans settled in several distinct neighborhoods, including Petersburg, Newburg, Smoketown, Berrytown, Griffytown, and Harrods Creek. Even today, many of these neighborhoods maintain a significant African American presence, and the neighborhoods' African American heritage is preserved through official signage and other cultural markings (KCAAH 2008).

This chapter begins with a review of the history of Louisville's African American community in the West End. Drawing from several historical accounts of blacks in West Louisville, pivotal moments in Louisville's history are highlighted to demonstrate how the city's unique history and development shaped the evolution of the West Louisville community (Cummings and Price 1997). This historical narrative narrows in on some of the key socio-political moments involving the African American community to establish the historical relationship between the city's white elite power brokers and African

American leaders in the city. This context of 'race relations' underscores many of the socio-political hurdles with which African Americans in Louisville had to contend during the second half of the 19th and first half of the 20th century. The historical narrative leads up to the civil rights movement of the 1960s in the city, where in 1967, the Kentucky Derby Festival became an integral component of the protest movement.

In Spring of 1967, the Kentucky Derby Festival made national headlines, but not for any of the reasons the city's elite wished. This chapter explores how the Festival became implicated in the open housing movement, which had by then become one of the most contentious facets of the civil rights movement in Louisville, and a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement nationally. Understanding the importance of the Festival to the city, and also understanding the heightened visibility festival time brought to the city, civil rights protest organizers leveraged the festival to ramp up pressure on the city leaders to yield to their demands for equal housing opportunities for all residents in the city. This chapter argues for the importance of the festival to the protest movement in eventually succeeding in achieving one of the most contentious civil rights victories in the city.

This chapter constitutes chronologically the first half of a look at the relationship between Louisville's African American community, protest movements in the streets, and the Kentucky Derby Festival. A second chapter follows this one that looks at a more contemporary example of African American protest and the Kentucky Derby Festival, one that ultimately involved Derby cruising on West Broadway.

Origins of Louisville's African American community

The city of Louisville has been often portrayed as having, relative to other Southern cities in the US, a more progressive and accommodating approach to race relations (e.g.

Stafford 1982; Coleman 1940). This narrative, though noted, has also been contested (Wright 1985; K'Meyer 2009; Aubespin, Clay, and Hudson 2011). The roots of this narrative are not entirely clear but could likely be traced back to the city's location as the largest urbanized area within Kentucky. In the pre-Civil War years, slavery in Kentucky was more of a domestic and small farm institution and less of a large-scale plantation labor force (Stafford 1982), the exception to this rule being the western parts of the state where plantation-style agricultural systems were more common. The state had legally mandated slavery by adopting the Kentucky Slave Code of 1798 which officially denied basic rights, including citizenship, education, legal marriages, and property ownership, to enslaved African Americans and effectively marginalized all black populations, both slave and free. By 1830, just 38 years after the state's founding, approximately 25 percent of its population was enslaved (Lucas 2003).

Scholars have noted how the local and national politics of the Civil War profoundly affected the future of race relations in the city moving forward (Lucas 2003; Cummings and Price 1997). Because of Kentucky's lesser economic dependence on the institution of slavery, the state never seceded from the Union to join the Confederacy. Like Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware, Kentucky became known as a Border State, or a state that legally allowed slavery yet did not secede from the Union. Because of Louisville's strategic location, it became a major hub for Union troops and activities during and immediately after the war. The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 formally ended slavery in states that had seceded, but importantly for states like Kentucky, it did not outlaw slavery there. However, federal law also dictated that slaves in border states like Kentucky could gain emancipation by joining the Union army. In Kentucky, approximately 28,000 enslaved

blacks enlisted to gain freedom - only Louisiana supplied more black troops to the Union army (Wright 1985). Overall, Kentucky supplied about 75,000 troops for the Union versus about 25,000 for the Confederacy. In rural areas of Kentucky, particularly those more dependent on slave labor, the loss of so many slaves to join the war effort was met with resistance and violence. Indeed approximately 100,000 remained enslaved throughout the war (Wright 1985).

As the Civil War came to a close, there was considerable unease and uncertainty throughout the state regarding the future of slavery. No federal order had yet passed officially freeing slaves from the border state, yet there was the expectation that victory over the Confederacy had effectively ended slavery. Though the abolition of slavery through the 13th Amendment of the US Constitution had been passed by Congress in January of 1865, it had not yet been fully adopted and would not be so until the end of the year. By summer in Louisville, estimates of twenty to fifty thousand blacks from throughout the state sought refuge in the city due largely to the presence there of thousands of Union troops. The troops were led by General John M. Palmer who had been appointed military governor of Kentucky by Abraham Lincoln prior to assassination. Lincoln had given Palmer, a noted abolitionist, free reign and unconditional support to do whatever it took to end slavery and maintain order in the state. And Palmer did just that. He enlisted thousands of blacks into the standing army occupying Louisville and issued even more "Palmer passes" to African Americans, allowing them free movement throughout the state and into Indiana (Lucas 1993). Despite resistance from white Kentuckians, Palmer was determined, as he wrote, "to drive the last nail in the coffin of the 'institution' even if it cost me the command of the department" (quoted in Wright 1985). At an African American

1865 Fourth of July parade and ceremony, Palmer abruptly and officially decreed all slaves in Kentucky freed, overriding both federal and state law. In doing so, "pandemonium broke out" (Wright 1985, 20). White leaders in the city were defiant of Palmer's decree, though ultimately powerless to stop Palmer's orders. Still, a Louisville grand jury later indicted Palmer on charges of aiding fugitive slaves.

After the civil war, a political shift occurred in Louisville. Historians have noted how after slavery was ended in Kentucky - not by the Emancipation Proclamation but by military order after the war - the city's political leanings shifted southward. While much of the South was occupied and monitored closely by Union troops during Reconstruction after the war, Kentucky largely escaped such supervision. Because of this, Louisville became somewhat of a stronghold for ex-Confederate officers who sought a more sympathetic community than in those cities controlled by Union troops (Cummings and Price 1997). In the decades following the Civil War, ex-Confederate officers became some of the leading politicians and businessmen in the city, so much so that historians have referred to Reconstruction in Kentucky as "Confederate Supremacy" (Wright 1985). Some have even argued "Kentucky did not join the Confederacy until after the Civil War." On this point, Wright argues that many whites in Kentucky who had supported the Union war effort under the promise that their right in the border state to own slaves would be protected were bitter after the war. In other words, many whites in Kentucky wanted to have it both ways – they wanted to support the Union and still be able to keep slaves (K'Meyer 2009). Marshall (2010) has similarly explored the southern nature of identity politics as they were shaped and contested after the Civil War. She argues, "the efforts of white Kentuckians to

celebrate the Confederacy played a major role in cementing and embellishing Kentucky's already-existing southern identity, in effect making it more southern" (2010, 4).

In rural areas, especially, whites vented their frustrations on the black community. In his sobering research on racial violence in Kentucky in the decades after the war, Wright (1990) documents 353 lynchings of blacks that occurred, the vast majority of which took place in rural areas and small towns throughout northern, central and western Kentucky. In addition to the lynchings, under the practice known as "whitecapping" rural whites would form mobs to run blacks off their newly acquired farmland, to the mob's gain. In instances where the black owners resisted rather than fleeing, violence ensued. Thousands of blacks fled rural areas for safety in numbers in cities such as Louisville; additionally tens of thousands of blacks fled Kentucky to the north (Wright 1985).

In urban areas like Louisville, the political climate "reinstituted segregationist policies designed to keep blacks at the lowest levels of society" (Cummings and Price, 616). In 1866, the Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation dictating that all African Americans would be forbidden to vote, serve on juries, or testify in court. German and Irish immigrant populations, now sometimes into the second and third generations in America, sided with native White Kentuckians, despite their violent past, in order to keep African Americans at the bottom rungs of the socio-economic ladder. By the late 1800s, Louisville was undergoing rapid industrialization, and the best factory jobs were reserved for whites only. From 1880 to 1910, under the leadership of Irish Catholic police chief and Democratic Party boss John Whallen, violence was the norm, as "police brutalized blacks at will" (Cummings and Price, 630).

Despite these obstacles, Louisville's black population coalesced and solidified, in the process creating neighborhood based communities throughout Louisville. Some of these neighborhoods included Smoketown, Brownstown, the California neighborhood, "Fort Hill," "Little Africa" (west Parkland), and the Russell neighborhood in the city, as well as Berrytown, Griffytown, Petersburg, and Orell in rural Jefferson County (Hudson 2004). Of these, the Russell neighborhood and corresponding Walnut Street business district became the socio-economic center for African Americans in the city and beyond. By 1900, African Americans comprised nineteen percent of Louisville's total population, and Louisville had become the seventh largest urban black population in the US (Aubespin, Clay, and Hudson 2011).

The late 1800s and early 1900s were characterized by a dynamic of increased segregation and marginalization under Jim Crow as countered by a slow but steady stream of hard-fought political victories by Louisville's African American community. At the federal level, passage of the 15th Amendment in 1870 overrode Kentucky law, enabling black males the right to vote. This was especially significant in Louisville, which had a sizable and active black community. Black Louisvillians succeeded in securing public funds for black schools in 1870, and by 1875, three all-black public schools, Eastern, Western, and Central, were opened with a total of 1,847 students (Lucas 2003). At the state level, African Americans were successful at securing education funding in 1875. Funding was not evenly distributed, as all-white schools received proportionally more than all-black schools, as segregated schooling was legally mandated, but some funding was better than none. Led by the efforts of A. E. Meyzeek, a prominent black Louisvillian, the first African American public library was opened in 1905 (Aubespin, Clay, and Hudson 2011).

Beginning in the early 1900s, residential segregation became increasingly enforced to levels not previously experienced in the city. This was coupled with the persistent exclusion of blacks from well-paying industrial and manufacturing jobs that were abundant in the city. In 1914, Louisville enacted a Residential Segregation Ordinance, putting into law practices that were already widespread. Led by the local chapter of the National Association for Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP), black Louisvillians fought the segregation ordinance all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, eventually achieving victory and overturning the ordinance in 1917 (Hudson 2004).

The impetus for the passage of the segregation ordinance was at least in part due to significant in-migration of African Americans from rural areas to the city. The Great Migration of 1915-1921 included the movement of over one million blacks from rural areas of the South to urban industrial centers, many of which were in the North, but also included cities such as Louisville (Adams 2010). Aubespin et al. argues that Louisville's black population did not grow all that much during the first migration because, even though the city took in migrants, it also lost many black migrants to northern destinations. Wright (1992) attributes the migration to violence and oppression that was more concentrated in rural areas through such practices as whitecapping, sharecropping, Night Riders, and the associated predominance of lynching in rural areas, which were less common in urban areas. Because of this massive movement of people, residential areas in Louisville became increasingly crowded, and living space was at a premium. White Louisvillians, alarmed at the perceived encroachment of black families into their neighborhoods, took measures to enforce segregation through Jim Crow practices.

Despite these problems, race relations in Louisville were viewed by many, both whites and blacks, to be more 'progressive' than in other places especially in the South (Wright 1985). Scholars have referred to an element of 'paternalism', also sometimes referred to as 'polite racism', among white elites in Louisville in regards to race relations. Mostly, white elites wanted to avoid conflict and social turmoil, and were willing to give in incrementally to demands from African American residents for better conditions. As Wright (1985) describes,

> "Black Louisvillians, however, did not respond with violence, but with resentment, suspicion, and disrespect for law officials. Leaders did not endorse retaliation against the police… Louisville was different from the deep South in that it was spared race riots, lynchings, and race bating that occurred elsewhere. Moreover no street car ordinances, segregation or exclusion at parks, and maintained the right to vote. But, like their counterparts to the South, Louisville whites would resort to violence to maintain the status quo, only they did it through the police. In Louisville, the police force was an ever-present symbol of white authority, reminding Afro-Americans to remain in their place and that any attempts to change the racial status quo would be met with resistance" (76).

Unlike other areas of the South, African American Louisvillians were able to use the power of the vote to influence city practices. In 1921, black Louisvillians formed the Lincoln Independent Party (LIP) to increase political leverage (Cummings and Price 1997), and one of their early successes was securing black employment among the police and firefighter forces (Lyman Johnson, a prominent African American who first migrated to Louisville from Columbia, TN in 1930 is quoted "I break Kentucky into two parts, Louisville and the rest of the state. Louisville is oriented to the North, culturally and commercially. The rest of Kentucky looks to the South" (quoted in Adams 2010, 39). As Adams points out, though Louisville may have been perceived as more liberal, "its progressive reputation was accurate only when measured by the standard set by the rest of the South" (39).

During this time, the Walnut Street business district, the largest black business and community center in Louisville, thrived. Walnut Street was described as the "heart and soul of the black community," or a "city within a city" (Adams, 150). The district peaked from the 1930s to 1950s and was home to all sorts of black businesses including retail, grocery, and professional services such as real estate, doctors, and lawyers. Through an interview for this dissertation, one resident reminisced on the importance of Walnut Street during this time:

> "I'm 80 years old, so I've been around for a long time. After I became a young lady, they had all the businesses on Walnut Street. Lionel Hampton, all the black musicians came, and we prepared for Derby because all of them were coming to town. Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Dinah Washington, all of them would be on Walnut Street. And they had two famous restaurants… and we had our movie theaters all on Walnut Street. We got to see all these stars for free on Derby, and got to talk to them all. On Walnut Street, on a nightclub night, you would think that the ladies and the gentlemen were going to church service. Because we were totally dressed, with the hats, the gloves, everything. Men with their ties and their suits on. The Top Hat was one of the prettiest night clubs in the country at that time. That created the atmosphere for our great musicians, our great black musicians, because really there was no other place for them to go."

From the 1930s to the 1950s, Louisville experienced a second era of African American migrations from rural areas to urban centers. This coincided with the Great Depression of the 1930s and the need for laborers during World War II in the early 1940s. Between just 1940 and 1946, Louisville's black population increased from 47,158 to 56,154; overall during the 1940s Louisville's black population grew by 7,195 (Adams 2010). During this time, Black neighborhoods became increasingly overcrowded due to restrictions on where they were allowed to live. This was exasperated by "urban renewal" processes. As Hudson (2004) explains,

> "Louisville, like many older American cities, underwent "urban renewal" in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As in the case of other cities, renewal plans targeted and demolished inner city core neighborhoods occupied

> primarily by African Americans and some poor and working class whites. In Louisville, an interesting cascade effect unfolded: the older black neighborhoods east and west of downtown were razed; blacks from these neighborhoods moved into the far western section of the city, as white residents were stampeded (i.e., "block busting", then "white flight") into the south end of the city and county" (22).

By the 1960s, the combined problems of segregation and economic marginalization became untenable for black residents of Louisville. As the rest of this chapter will describe, the era of 'progressive' white attitudes toward racial issues and the accompanying incremental progress toward equality was shattered in 1967 as the city dug in its heels over the issue of equal and open housing. To overcome the city's intransigence, black Louisvillians mounted a considerable protest movement that culminated with the Kentucky Derby Festival of 1967.

Derby Festival 1967 and The Battle for Open Housing

Up to 1960, African Americans had been successful in desegregating certain aspects of society, including public parks, golf courses, and libraries. Additionally, integration of public schools in Louisville occurred without too much turmoil. However, as African Americans' demands for equality and civil rights persisted into wider domains, white resistance in the city became more and more entrenched. In Louisville, these battles took shape through public accommodations, employment, housing, and finally, true school desegregation through busing.

Through the 1950s, white owned establishments held a policy of exclusion toward African Americans. Restaurants, stores, and theaters either excluded blacks altogether, or had a different set of rules whereby blacks could be served separately and unequally. Black resistance to these practices began to grow in the late 1950s, and by 1960 community leaders – both black and white liberals – began pressing for a public accommodations

ordinance (Aubespin, Clay, and Hudson 2011). In 1961 black youths began organizing public protests and sit-ins at discriminating businesses downtown. An additional symbolic target of protest was Fontaine Ferry, the popular local amusement park in Portland that disallowed blacks from entering. These initial demonstrations were supported by some of the Louisville white liberal elite, including the editor of the *Courier-Journal*, Barry Bingham, Sr. (Aubespin, Clay, and Hudson 2011).

Tired of the unresponsiveness from the city's Democratic leadership, including the mayor and key aldermen, black community leaders organized in 1961 a massive voter registration and were successful in replacing the Democratic leadership with Republicans in the 1961 elections (K'Meyer 2009). Even with this success, it was still over a year before the city passed the public accommodations ordinance in May of 1963. This marked an important victory for African American Louisvillians, who were successful at using the power of the vote to achieve a civil rights victory at time before the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 that enabled African Americans in other southern cities to use this strategy. This victory in Louisville was followed by the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, an anti-discrimination ordinance in Louisville in 1965, and the Kentucky Civil Rights Act of 1966.

Though the struggle for desegregated schooling went through without major incident, the same could not be said for the struggle for open housing. In 1948 the U.S. Supreme Court had outlawed restrictive neighborhood covenants that discriminated against blacks, nonetheless, the practice remained widespread into the 1950s. In 1950 a hundred white families in West Louisville formed the Shawnee Foundation and raised fifteen thousand dollars to buy a house and prevent it from being sold to an African American family (K'Meyer 2009). In other areas, whites harassed and sometimes vandalized black

families and their homes in order to intimidate and slow the process of black movement into white residential areas (K'Meyer 2009).

One of the more infamous and well-chronicled incidents occurred in Shively, which at the time was a new post-war suburb being built southwest of the city and adjoining the rural countryside. After a black family moved into the all-white neighborhood, they were repeatedly harassed, their windows shot out with guns, and eventually their house was destroyed by dynamite. The story is chronicled in the book *The Wall Between* (1999), by Anne Braden, a noted anti-racism activist who witnessed the events firsthand.

The issue of open housing was first raised in the city in 1963 by the *Louisville Defender* (K'Meyer 2009), the city's African American newspaper, who noted the national trend of open housing ordinances, the first of which was passed in New York City in 1957. By the 1960s, the problem of adequate housing for African Americans in Louisville was becoming critical, due to the rising number of African Americans in the city, the destructive forces of urban renewal which had razed historically African American areas of the city, and the continued racial housing segregation enforced in the city. After several years of pressing the city on the issue, in September of 1966, open housing proponents submitted a proposed ordinance to the city's board of aldermen which would outlaw housing discrimination based on race, color, creed, or national origin (K'Meyer 2009). The city stalled on addressing the issue, particularly because of concerns over whether the ordinance would have any teeth in terms of enforcement.

By early Spring of 1967, pressure on the city to pass an open housing ordinance ramped up significantly. Within the city, open housing proponents formed the Committee on Open Housing (COH), a bi-racial committee which included and was led by local

activists such as the Rev. A.D. Williams King, the Rev. Leo Lesser, and Anne Braden (K'Meyer 2009). Through the COH, activists began organizing demonstrations to increase awareness of the issue and pressure the city to stop stalling. Open housing demonstrations were boosted by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a national civil rights organization who sent "technicians" to Louisville to aid the demonstrators (Adams 2010). With the aid of the SCLC, including national civil rights activist Hosea Williams and comedian Dick Gregory, demonstrations became more frequent and included marches in all-white neighborhoods to the homes of the mayor and aldermen, picketing and sit-ins at City Hall, prayer vigils and downtown rallies (The Courier-Journal 1967e). By March of 1967, the issue of open housing in Louisville had become the focal point of the national civil rights movement.

Resistance to open housing in Louisville was significant and severe. A February public hearing on the proposed open housing ordinance in an all-white neighborhood drew a crowd of over one thousand open housing opponents, who heckled and jeered the ten supporters of open housing that had showed up to speak (K'Meyer 2009). Opposition to open housing coalesced into the Concerned Citizens Committee who vowed to fight "forced open housing" at the local and national level. City leaders, including Mayor Schmied, were openly critical of the demonstrations, particularly because of the involvement of national civil rights organizations. On March 14, during a sit-in at the board of aldermen meeting, police forcibly removed demonstrators by pulling them down stairs and into the street (K'Meyer 2009).

To attract more national attention on the issue, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. arrived in Louisville to advise and lead the open housing efforts through the Committee on Open

Housing (COH). On March 30, Dr. King led a march to Memorial Auditorium, site of a gathering of 500 members of the Concerned Citizens Committee. Open housing advocates began nightly marches through the city's South End, which was a lower-middle class and exclusively white area of the city. The marchers referred to these demonstrations as "home shopping", because, after all, they argued tongue in cheek, "you can't buy anything until you've looked at it" (as quoted in Adams 2010).

The nightly South End marches ratcheted up the intensity in the city significantly. Marchers were met by mobs of white "hecklers", who hurled eggs, rocks and insults at the demonstrators (Drummond 1967a). For their part, demonstrators were urged not to retaliate, and the Rev. Richard Boone was quoted, "War makes enemies, and the idea of nonviolence is to make allies. We're trying to bring a problem to the eyes of the people of Louisville so they'll deal with it. We'll pit soul force against brute force. We're saying that though you may kill our bodies, we're still coming on" (The Courier-Journal 1967n). Most demonstrations also included significant police presence in an effort to maintain order and keep distance between the demonstrators and hecklers.

Behind the scenes, Mayor Schmied was pursuing negotiations with open housing advocates to produce an ordinance that would be amenable enough to the board of aldermen for passage into law. Generally supportive of the open housing cause, the *Courier-Journal* urged the city to pass a housing ordinance in order to keep "racial peace" (The Courier-Journal 1967d). Meanwhile, civic organizations were becoming increasingly uneasy about the national exposure Louisville's open housing struggle was receiving. On March 31, the mayor submitted to the aldermen a watered down ordinance that lacked adequate enforcement teeth and included seven amendments designed to appease the open housing

opponents. The COH was divided on whether or not to support the weak ordinance. The *Louisville Defender* weighed in to support the ordinance, arguing that it was the best that could be had for the time being (K'Meyer 2009). The proposed ordinance was put before the board of aldermen on April 11 and, despite the efforts of the mayor and compromises made by the open housing advocates, it was soundly defeated by a vote of 9 to 3 (Crowdus 1967a). A statement released by the board of aldermen after the vote blamed its defeat on "outside agitators" who had "so poisoned the atmosphere that no rational thought or action is possible… This is mob rule of the worst sort" (The Courier-Journal 1967p). The aldermen's statement included several recommendations going forward, including further study of the issue, an end to demonstrations, and to identify outside open housing activists and "deal with them" (The Courier-Journal 1967p).

Not only had the board of aldermen rejected the ordinance, but their statement "in tone and substance frequently borders on the frivolous," as described by the Rev. Alfred F. Horrigan, the chairman of Louisville's Commission on Human Relations, a city agency tasked with improving race relations in the city (Crowdus 1967a). An editorial in the *Courier-Journal* referred to the situation as "tragic human failure in the face of a moral challenge" (The Courier-Journal 1967g).

The rejection of the ordinance represented a turning point in the open housing fight. In response to the aldermen's decision, open housing advocates doubled down on the protest movement. Two hundred and fifty demonstrators marched downtown to protest the defeat of the open housing ordinance (Crowdus 1967b). Additionally, open housing advocates decided to use the rapidly approaching Kentucky Derby Festival as a way of increasing pressure on the city. Dick Gregory called for the city to pass a meaningful

housing law or call off the Derby. He was quoted, "We've got enough cats in this country that may not come here to march, but they will come to stop that race… We are going to tell people all over the country not to come to Louisville unless they are going to picket and not to come to that race track unless they are going to lay down to keep the race from starting. We gonna tell them white folks that they won't enjoy the first Saturday in May if we are not enjoying (open-housing) before them" (The Courier-Journal 1967i). In addition to threats to disrupt the Derby, the NAACP organized a boycott of downtown businesses that would be in effect until open housing was achieved (Crowdus 1967b).

By mid-April, the nightly South End marches were being met by increasingly large and violent mobs of white hecklers. Both demonstrators themselves and the police there to maintain order were the target of the hecklers, who now numbered in the hundreds and were hurling eggs, rocks, bricks, and firecrackers (The Courier-Journal 1967a). On April 13, as open housing marchers arrived in the South End, they were greeted by a giant Confederate Flag and a burning cross on the lawn near the start of the march. Windows on the buses carrying the marchers were shattered by rocks being hurled by hecklers. Over one hundred officers were called in as backup to try and prevent further violence. A.D. King was struck in the eye by a thrown rock and his sixteen year-old daughter knocked to the ground by a hurled board (K'Meyer 2009).

As the situation began to escalate out of control, the city responded by issuing a court order forbidding nightly marches. The court order allowed marching only under certain conditions: during daylight hours but not during rush hour, must not disrupt traffic, must not include more than 150 demonstrators, and a written notice must be submitted twelve hours in advance. The court order was immediately ignored by open housing

demonstrators, who continued nightly South End marches (The Courier-Journal 1967j). Each subsequent night's march attracted a larger and unrulier crowd of hecklers. A picture on the front page of the *Courier-Journal* showed a mob of white hecklers carrying signs that included Nazi swastikas and read slogans such as "Back to Africa" or "White Power" (The Courier-Journal 1967l). On April 15, both demonstrators and police were pelted with objects being thrown by a crowd of nearly one thousand hecklers, and a police car was overturned by the mob. Officers resorted to using tear gas on the hecklers to diffuse the situation.

Because of the new court order outlawing nightly marches, demonstrators became the target of arrest by officers. That the peaceful marchers were the subject of arrest rather than the violent anti-open housing mob, is notable. On the first night after the court order, 89 demonstrators were arrested (The Courier-Journal 1967l). On the next night, 127 were arrested, though rain showers kept the hecklers at bay (The Courier-Journal 1967m). The next night 113 were arrested, and tear gas was used again (The Courier-Journal 1967c). The next night, as the arrests began to take a toll on the demonstrators, 56 were arrested (The Courier-Journal 1967b). By late April, the sheer number of arrests was hampering the ability of the COH to continue nightly marches, and so a new strategy was needed. The protest movement adopted the slogan, "No Housing, No Derby", and the upcoming Kentucky Derby became the focal point of the planned demonstrations (Hill 2011). National civil rights leader Hosea Williams, in Louisville to support the cause, was among the most adamant in calling for a Derby protest. He proposed several tactics for disrupting the events. One was to organize "drive-ins", where activists would take their cars to the streets around Churchill Downs and drive very slowly, ensnarling traffic and preventing

spectators, owners, trainers, and perhaps even horses themselves, from ever getting to the track. Another proposed tactic was to actually get protesters to rush the track once the race started and organize a sit-in. On this subject, Dick Gregory was quoted, "I ain't going to lay down in front of a horse myself but there's a lot of cats that will. If it comes to closing the Derby up, we'll just have to close it up" (quoted in Hill 2011).

With the protest movement now threatening to disrupt Derby, the city began scrambling to try and appease the open housing advocates. Led by Mayor Schmied, the city began negotiations with the open housing leaders to come to a suitable agreement. Acting in good faith, demonstrators called a temporary moratorium on nightly marches as the city negotiated. Many were skeptical of the city's sincerity though, and the Rev. Leo Lesser was quoted "We are afraid that they (the city officials) will get past the Derby and the primary election and then tell us to go to hell" (The Courier-Journal 1967o). The city scoured its legal resources and came up with a concoction of three little-known existing ordinances, which theoretically in combination achieved the goal of open-housing. The legal find was dismissed by both sides as irrelevant and unenforceable.

The issue of actually stopping the Derby was a contentious one, even for open housing advocates. The COH was divided on whether or not such tactics would be wise. The Kentucky Derby was the most significant event on Louisville's calendar, and some activists feared a massive backlash from even sympathetic white supporters if the race was shut down. The *Courier-Journal* was in a tricky position, in that it was both generally sympathetic to the open housing cause but also fiercely protective of the Kentucky Derby Festival. A *Courier-Journal* editorial arguing against protesting the Derby read "Any scene of strife would be recorded by the television cameras for a nationwide audience.

Such an episode could only harden the minds of the Louisville aldermen and give the majority of that group a fresh excuse for refusing to act… Open housing has nothing to gain and a great deal to lose by demonstrations at Churchill Downs on Derby day." (The Courier-Journal 1967f). Similarly, the *Louisville Defender* came out against disrupting the Derby (K'Meyer 2009). Nevertheless, as the calendar turned to May, open housing advocates vowed to back up their "No Housing, No Derby" agenda.

As Derby week arrived, Williams and other activists began 'trial runs' for their Derby day protests, including marches to Churchill Downs where hundreds were arrested. Drive-ins around the track were also tried, leading to traffic mayhem throughout the week, and even some horses not being able to reach their post times during day races (Hill 2011). On Monday of Derby week, five activists climbed the rails of the track as a race was nearing completion and sat in the middle of the track, disrupting the race and making it apparent their intentions for Derby Day, much to the city's horror (The Courier-Journal 1967h). The Pegasus Parade, scheduled to be held Thursday of Derby week and usually attracting a crowd of about 200,000, was canceled out of fears that the police would not be able to maintain order (The Courier-Journal 1967k). The year 1967 was the only year since the Pegasus Parade began in 1956 that it did not take place. Other Derby events, such as a Country and Western Music Show, were similarly canceled (The Courier-Journal 1967q).

As tensions escalated, the mayor called in National Guard troops to help quell the situation near Churchill Downs and assure the running of the Derby. Additionally, the Ku Klux Klan announced it would be sending in 'troops' to help make sure the race went on as usual (Hill 2011). Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. returned to Louisville to consult with local leaders and devise a strategy for Derby Day. Fearing considerable violence, clashes, and

possibly riots, open housing activists debated heavily over how to proceed. Finally, six hours before the running of the Derby, Dr. King brokered a "compromise" with city leaders, whereby the protesters would allow the Derby to run uncontested as a "gesture of good faith to refute the claim that we are interested only in disruption for disruption's sake" (Drummond 1967b).

The Derby did run uncontested that year. The decision not to disrupt the Derby was hailed by both the *Courier-Journal* and the *Louisville Defender* as a good one. Some activists, however, were dismayed by the decision and disheartened by the leadership's decision not to carry through with its threats. One activist, marching downtown instead of at Churchill Downs, was quoted, "I don't see any point in this. I wanted to go to the Derby. I personally would have laid down on the track" (Drummond 1967b).

Despite the decision to leave the Derby alone, COH leaders vowed to up their protests and demonstrations in coming weeks. Nightly marches through the South End were again held, many of them led by Dr. King. Once the marches resumed, the crowds of anti-open housing hecklers returned as well. In addition to hurling objects at the demonstrators, hecklers began driving cars at the marchers, as the mob shouted "hit them, hit them!" (K'Meyer 2009). Though the scene remained tense for several weeks, the open housing momentum had taken a hit after Derby, and the numbers of demonstrators marching through the South End began to dwindle. By late May, movement leaders were forced to reevaluate the strategy for gaining an open housing ordinance.

By late 1967, with still no progress made on the issue, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. again visited Louisville to help organize a massive voter registration drive just in time for the coming city elections. Open housing leaders had opted for the strategy of using the

African American community's collective political voice to enact change in the city, similar the strategy used in 1961 to obtain a public accommodations ordinance. The registration was successful, and, like in 1961, the majority of the Board of Aldermen was voted out and replaced by a new Board. Shortly after, on December 13 1967, an open housing ordinance was finally passed. In early 1968, the state of Kentucky followed suit, as the Kentucky legislature passed its own open housing act.

The battle for open housing in Louisville demonstrates one example by which large cultural festivals, such as the Kentucky Derby Festival, can be used by marginalized populations to forward a protest agenda. When the proposed open housing ordinance was rejected by the board of aldermen in April 1967, activists immediately seized upon the Derby as a means for placing incredible pressure on the city to acquiesce to their demands. The threat to disrupt the Derby placed Louisville in the national spotlight for several weeks, raising the awareness of the cause not only locally, but nationally as well. The threat was real enough for the city to cancel several high-visibility events, including the Pegasus Parade, out of fear that anti-open housing hecklers would clash violently with demonstrators intent on disrupting the event.

The ultimate decision not to disrupt the Derby also points to the limitations of using festival as a vehicle for protest. In Louisville, COH leaders decided, in essence, that the Derby was 'too big to fail,' and that any short term gains had by disrupting the Derby would be offset by long term consequences, such as a hardening of opinions of moderates in the city against the movement. In the immediate aftermath of the Derby Day 1967, though protests continued in the city for a few weeks, it appeared as though the anti-open housing forces were winning the battle, and effective change would not be had. In the long run,

however, the decision not to disrupt the Derby paid off at election time. The movement's good faith decision not to disrupt the Derby likely led even more moderates to sympathize with the cause. This, combined with the effective efforts by COH leaders to register large numbers of African Americans for the November election, enabled open housing advocates to defeat the intransigent board of aldermen at their own game. In this way, Derby 1967 demonstrates how protest movements can successfully leverage large festivals to their long-term advantage.

Postscript to the Civil Rights Movement in Louisville

The successful open housing campaign of 1967 did not mark the end of the struggle for civil rights and equal opportunities for African Americans in Louisville. Despite the open housing victory of 1967, the socio-economic conditions of Louisville's African American community remained a problem. Racial tensions reached a near boiling point in 1968 following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis. In May of that year, the frustration erupted into violence, sparked by the arrest of a young black school teacher who, according to police, resembled a robbery suspect. An agitated crowd of African Africans residents gathered at 28th Street and Greenwood Avenue in West Louisville to protest the arresting officers' eventual reinstatement from suspension, and as the crowd grew both in numbers and agitation, their protests spilled out into the neighborhood in the form of a riot. Rioters destroyed businesses throughout the West End and as far downtown as 4th Street. The riot led to 472 people being arrested and $200,000 in damages from the looting and burning of businesses (Tyler 2008). The following year, on May 4 1969, another angry mob descended on Fontaine Ferry Park, an amusement park in the West End, and heavily vandalized the park's booths and rides (Kaiser 2008). The

park, which had notorious history of segregation and exclusion and had long been held in the African American community as a symbol of racism and marginalization, never reopened.

The Louisville riot of 1968 and the subsequent destruction of Fontaine Ferry Park left an indelible legacy for residents of the West End. Rioters had looted and destroyed businesses, both white and black owned, and the African American Walnut Street business district, already thoroughly decimated by urban renewal programs, never recovered. In the years after the riots, what white residents remained in West Louisville moved away from the inner city toward the quickly growing suburbs of Jefferson County outside the city's boundaries. Despite legal restrictions against segregation in schooling and housing, segregation remained widespread to the extent that 83 percent of city schools were "racially identifiable" (K'Meyer 2009). In 1973, the issue of school segregation was brought before the legal system, where civil rights advocates argued that the separate city and county school systems should be merged in order to adequately address the issue of segregation. In December of 1973, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in Cincinnati ruled in favor of civil rights activists in ruling that the schools system had failed to address previous court orders ordering the removal of "all vestiges of state imposed segregation" (quoted in K'Meyer). As a result of the court order, the city and county school systems were merged, and the school system was forced to institute a policy of assigning and busing children to schools in a manner that would address racial inequality and promote school integration.

In Summer of 1975, as the multiple court cases began to resolve, the Jefferson County school district began making plans for mandatory busing of kids across the county

to even out the racial makeup of children in the schools. Resistance to the plan was significant, particularly among working class whites, who organized through labor unions and other organizations a defiant response. K'Meyer (2009) argues the particular resistance by working-class whites represents the "defensive insecurity of working-class Americans, who felt squeezed between the economic downturn of the time and their perception that the federal government was helping others at their expense." On September 3, the eve of the first day of school, a mass rally of nearly 15 thousand people convened at the Kentucky State Fairgrounds to protest busing. An additional rally of about two-thousand marched downtown and was joined by a number of organizations, including labor unions and the Ku Klux Klan. Tensions were high for the first day of school, and many white families boycotted by not sending their children to school that day. Nonetheless, the first day of school went largely without incident. The relative calm of the first day erupted into violence shortly after. At and around several South End high schools, white protesters numbering in the thousands burned buses, set bonfires blocking traffic on major roads, and clashed violently with the police. Clashes persisted through the day and into the night, leading to hundreds of arrests and multiple injuries, including injuries to dozens of police officers. By September 5, hundreds of city, county, and state police were on the scene, as well as a force of 800 national guard troops to restore order. Finally, with such a show of force, and the usage of tear gas to disperse the crowds, tensions began to relax. Still, throughout the fall of 1975, protests and demonstrations continued, many of which were not just opposed to busing but openly and hostilely racist as well. K'Meyer documents the protests, clashes, and violence that continued throughout the 1975-76 school year and into

following years as well. Over time, the protests eventually dissipated, as there was going to be no overturning of the court order mandating school integration.

The busing crisis of 1975 indicates how even with the hard earned civil rights victories of the 1960s, absolute equality for African Americans would still be hard to come by. It also marked the end of the civil rights movement in the city after decades of turmoil, protest, and momentous political shifts. Unquestionably, the city was shaken by these events, as this commentary from the 1978 Kentucky Derby Program attests:

> "When the Derby Festival began in the late fifties, Louisville saw itself as an enlightened, southern city. A relaxed, genteel manner concealed an energetic, progressive mentality that could use a good symphony orchestra as bait to lure new factories or pioneer in ways to break down the South's racial separation. A lot has happened in the last twenty years. Dixie has caught up with the times and is building its hard won bi-racial society; the Sunbelt is attracting new industry; and the nation has crowned a son of the Deep South as its leader. Louisville's reputation for moderation, calm and gradual progress in race relations was shaken by the hot summer of 1968 and by backlash against cross-county busing seven years later. Shorn of our old image, we began to fear Louisville might become like other medium-sized cities: able to switch interchangeable parts such as fast food chains, sprawling suburbs, interstate highways, and empty storefronts from one city to another without anyone's noticing." (Owen 1978)

CHAPTER 6: PROTEST AND THE DERBY FESTIVAL PART II: PROTEST AND THE POLICE

This chapter investigates how in the late 1990s and leading up to the 2000 Derby Festival, racial tensions once again peaked within the city of Louisville. Several incidents of police violence, both in the local and national context, sparked protests from the community, leading to tension and turmoil within the Louisville police department and the city administration. Similarly to the open housing protests of 1967, the protest movement in 2000 peaked with the Kentucky Derby Festival. This chapter documents how lessons learned by activists in the late 1960s helped shape the protest agenda and tactics of the 2000 protests and ultimately led to the protest movement's successes. The KDF became the venue through which blacks could capture the attention of the city's elite in order to demand change. Through these tactics, the city eventually instituted changes regarding police supervision, community policing, and better inclusion of African Americans in the KDF sponsored events.

In addition to the formal protests by activists, this chapter chronicles how Derby cruising became implicated in the tension and unrest between the city and the West Louisville community. With the growing popularity of Derby cruising and the growing hostility from and toward the police department, many feared Derby weekend would blow up into full blown unrest, protest, or as some feared, riots. Ultimately, cooler heads prevailed, led by the efforts of the Derby City Ambassadors, a group of volunteer West Louisville community leaders who served as intermediaries between Derby cruisers and the police department. Because the more formalized protests served as an outlet for dissent

and resistance, Derby cruising went on as a more festive-centered event for youth celebrating Derby weekend in the city.

This chapter begins with a review of the current socio-economic conditions as they pertain to West Louisville. Drawing from the literature in urban geography and sociology on racial segregation and concentrated poverty, this chapter situates West Louisville within broader socio-economic trends at work in the US city that have resulted in particular inner city neighborhoods being characterized by extreme segregation and poverty. Following chronologically from the previous chapter, these urban trends solidified under Reagan's conservatism of the 1980s and heightened even further during Clinton's welfare reform of the 1990s.

West Louisville and Socio-economic trends

> "Louisville, not without violent struggle, has made major strides to distance itself from a segregationist and racist past. During the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, major policy changes occurred in the city leading to reduction in overt discrimination. During this same time period, however, the city was also devastated by sweeping changes in its industrial and manufacturing base. The effect of these larger economic forces appears to have severely eroded the ability of the city's minority population to avail itself of opportunities created through reduction of discrimination. Ironically, the city's opportunity structure was radically altered at the very time when civil rights gains were accelerating. It is in this latter sense that our findings are compatible with Wilson's observations about the public policy importance of focusing the modem civil rights struggle on jobs and economic development" (Cummings and Price 1997, 646).

Social scientists have long examined the American version of spatially and racially concentrated poverty within urban areas. Noteworthy early works considered the deplorable living conditions of recent immigrants in New York (Riis 2011), the emerging metropolitan concentration of black residents in Chicago (Drake and Cayton 1945) and the crystallization of the black ghetto (Clark 1965). As early as 1903, W.E.B. DuBois famously

and presciently declared that the problem of twentieth-century America would be the color line (Du Bois 1999), and his spatial metaphor remains nearly as true today as it ever was. As in generations past, race continues to be the primary determinant of one's location within an urban area.

However, though some things have remained seemingly constant, others have changed considerably. The ghetto of decades past has been reduced to a state of extreme concentrated poverty, limited resources, and limited opportunities for improvement. Structural changes in the economy and shifting federal and local policies toward social service provision have contributed to heightening levels of poverty and marginalization. At the same time, the emergence of the black middle class combined with the end of legal discrimination in housing and employment opportunities has led to considerable outmigration of better-off black residents from traditional ghetto areas. The newly formed "underclass" (Wilson 1993), "hyperghetto" (Wacquant 2008b), or "outcast ghetto" (Marcuse 1997) has resulted. This process can be described as having taken place through several phases throughout the 1900s. This section will explore the development of West Louisville within this context, as multiple forces of migration, segregation, and marginalization have impacted the neighborhood's form.

The first phase of ghetto formation took place as large numbers of African Americans migrated primarily from the rural South to urban industrial centers seeking the stable employment that the Fordist economy of heavy manufacturing provided. This phase of migration, generally referred to as the Second Great Migration, occurred from 1940 to 1970, and included the migration of approximately 5 million African Americans to urban areas such as Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington DC in the East, Chicago, Detroit,

and Cleveland in the Midwest, and Los Angeles, Dallas and Kansas City in the West. In Kentucky, the migration was characterized by the movement of 17,000 African Americans to the city of Louisville (Adams 2006).

In the early 1900s, Louisville did not have distinct ghetto or black neighborhoods like the city experienced in the latter half of the century. California district and Smoketown were established, but "far more significant is the fact that blacks and whites often lived on the very same streets, and that some streets which had more blacks than whites in one given year did not necessarily become all black streets." (Wright 1985, 103)

Blacks moving to cities like Louisville were greeted with restrictions on both residential locations and access to employment. Whites received preferential treatment in the hiring practices for unionized factory positions, while blacks were often excluded altogether from being hired. In the rare instances when blacks were hired, it was for service jobs or low-skilled work, such as janitorial positions, that offered less job security, less pay, and less socioeconomic status (Cummings and Price 1997). So while working class whites, who were also moving from rural areas to the city in large numbers, benefitted significantly from the labor situation, comparatively few working class blacks were able to benefit from the steady employment and upward mobility that factory jobs provided.

What made this time period unique was the institution of heightened levels of residential segregation. In 1860, the black-white segregation index for Louisville stood at 20.2 (segregation index ranges from 0-100, where 0 indicates full integration and 100 indicates maximum segregation); but by 1940 it had climbed to 81.7 (Berlin 1974). These elevated levels of residential segregation mixed with large numbers of incoming African American migrants and the relative lack of economic opportunity created a situation of

increasing poverty that was spatially concentrated in distinct and growing neighborhoods. This newly created "negro slum" (Wilson 2007) was the frequent target of urban renewal programs that more often than not exacerbated the situation for African American communities by bulldozing the institutions that were holding the community together to make way for projects, which in Louisville included interstate highways and large medical complexes.

Table 6.1: Louisville Segregation Index, 1940-1990. The segregation index is a measure of entropy among racial residential patterns in the city. In short, it measures how many black households would have to move out of their current neighborhood and into a different, whiter, neighborhood before 'equilibrium,' or an even distribution of households by race throughout the city, would be reached. Source (Cummings and Price 1997)

Year	Louisville Pop.	Black Pop.	% Black	Segregation Index
1940	319,077	47,158	14.8	70.0
1950	369,129	57,657	15.6	73.6
1960	390,639	70,075	17.9	78.9
1970	361,472	86,040	23.8	83.6
1980	298,451	84,060	28.2	80.0
1990	269,063	79,783	29.7	75.4

The second phase of ghetto formation refers to the post-civil rights era of the 1970s and 1980s where legal segregation and racial discrimination was ended but nonetheless still widely practiced. In Louisville this phase begins in the wake of the Open Housing protests chronicled in the previous chapter. Wacquant (2008a) refers to this phase as the "communal ghetto" because African Americans of all socioeconomic statuses were restricted to living within the same neighborhoods, most often in aging and neglected parts

of the city. During this period, social service gains from President Johnson's New Society, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and federal housing allocations, provided some assistance to the poor and underprivileged and helped provide some stability for these neighborhoods that contained blacks of multiple socioeconomic classes, including the poor, the working poor, and the emerging black middle class.

However, this phase was also characterized by the rise of Reagan's "welfare-ghetto" rhetoric that discursively produced inner-city black social service recipients as the "undeserving poor," (Wilson 2007). Over the course of this period, social service programs were repeatedly gutted as federal spending began shifting away from one of "social security" to the industry of "fear and insecurity," such as national defense, law enforcement and growing prison system. This included an eighty percent reduction in federal housing appropriations during the 1980s, a forty-seven percent reduction in AFDC from 1975-1995, before being replaced altogether by Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and a dramatic rise in the number of those incarcerated within the federal prison system. Incarcerations increased five-fold from 1975-2000 despite relatively low and hardly changing crime levels (Wacquant 2009a).

Compounding these problems, the U.S. economy was undergoing a massive shift from the Fordist industrial and manufacturing economy to the post-Fordist service and skilled labor economy. Louisville was among those cities particularly hard hit by the loss of manufacturing jobs. By 1988, the number of manufacturing jobs in the city had fallen to 88,000, indicating the loss of 32,000 industrial jobs over the previous fifteen years (Crouch 1989). According to records compiled by Savitch (2008), Jefferson County lost one-third of its manufacturing jobs between 1970 and 2000; between 1970 and 1980, the

decline was 9%; between 1980 and 1990, the drop was almost 19%; and between 1990 and 2000, manufacturing job losses were 9%.

The job losses in Louisville mirrored the national trends. As Wacquant (2008b) describes,

> "Of the 23 million jobs created in the country between 1970 and 1984, a full 22 million were in the service sector, so that by 1990 upwards of three-fourths of all employment was in services. But nearly one-third of all jobs generated in the 1980s were part-time positions, and 75 percent of these were filled by people who would have preferred to work full-time. Furthermore, many of these service jobs paid between $4 and $6 an hour, a far cry from the hourly rate of $12-15 common in the unionized branches of durable-goods manufacturing" (71).

Though these structural economic changes were occurring throughout the U.S., they were spatially concentrated in certain areas. For cities of the Northeast and Midwest, deindustrialization took place at a staggering pace. All told, this breakup of the Fordist-Keynesian pact created a downward spiral of spatially and racially concentrated poverty, leading to the third phase of ghetto formation.

From about 1990 on, scholars have noted the collapse of inner cities under enormous strain from depleting resources and lack of opportunity. Cities have adopted neoliberal policies characterized by the shifting of attention and resources away from a "politics of redistribution" toward a "politics of resource attraction" (Cox 1993). This spirit of "urban entrepreneurialism" (Harvey 1989) signified a shift in policy that pitted city against city in an attempt to attract industry and job providers through tax abatements and other incentives. To support this shift, cities adopted a "revanchist ethos" (MacLeod 2002) aimed at "sanitizing" public spaces and removing "undesirable" elements from public view (Mitchell 2003). In effect, this entailed the drastic increase in arrests for nonviolent and

petty offenses (Wacquant 2009b) and even greater levels of segregation of black inner-city residents (Massey and Denton 1993).

Wacquant (2008b) describes this most recent state of poverty and segregation as a third phase of ghetto formation, one which he characterizes as "hyperghettoization". Stemming from the implementation of neoliberal policies that dismantle the welfare state and other forms of social service provision and replace them with heightened policing and harsher penalties reflective of an emphasis on "individual responsibility", hyperghettoization describes the poverty of black urbanites that is more intense, more concentrated, and more encompassing than in generations past. This phase of ghetto formation is fueled in part by the "deproletarianization" (27) of ghetto residents. This phenomenon refers to the advanced marginality produced by lack of access to jobs. Marcuse (1997) refers to it as an "outcast ghetto" because, unlike in decades past, there is no exploitive gain for the dominant over the marginalized. Previously used metaphors of the inner city ghetto as a "colony" and the ruling class as "colonizers" who exploited and benefitted from the dependent relationship no longer apply. An outcast ghetto is differentiated both "horizontally and vertically" (238) in that impoverished black residents are segregated to a specific place in the city and excluded from the economic mainstream. Wilson (1989) similarly argues that the creation of the "underclass" results first and foremost by joblessness and is followed by social isolation, stigmatization, and the downward spiral of 'the culture of poverty', which is symptomatic of larger issues. Alexander (2012) describes this most current regime as "a stunningly comprehensive and well-disguised system of racialized social control that functions in a manner strikingly similar to Jim Crow" (4). She argues that the so-called "War on Drugs," first instituted by

President Reagan in the 1980s, has effectively marginalized the African American urban poor through unequal enforcement and highly punitive drug sentencing. The result has been the exclusion of African Americans from the economic mainstream and a denial of the ability to obtain housing, employment, and public benefits.

The socioeconomic geography of Louisville today is in part a product of the processes of racialization and segregation that have occurred throughout the city's history. Nonetheless, recent trends reveal an emerging shift in the racial dynamic associated with the city's neighborhoods. Based on census information gathered over the last few decades, Louisville has been characterized by high segregation according to the segregation index. Louisville has traditionally scored very poorly on this segregation index.

Most recent census data shows the segregation index in Louisville is gradually declining, but not in a uniform manner. In Louisville, the segregation index rose from 70.0 in 1940 to 83.6 in 1970, and then gradually declined to 73.8 in 2000 (Hudson 2004). Still, nearly two generations after the open housing movement, Louisville remains one of the most racially segregated cities in the nation. In the traditionally white, suburban, middle class neighborhoods in the eastern and southern parts of Louisville/Jefferson County, segregation has decreased. The overall percentage of whites in these census tracts is declining, and the corresponding percentages of not only blacks, but other racial/ethnic minorities as well, is increasing. This suggests that for African American families who have gained higher socio-economic status, more residential opportunities are available beyond solely the traditionally black West End. These suburban locales are still predominantly white, but given that the overall population of Louisville/Jefferson County in its entirety is predominantly white, this is expected.

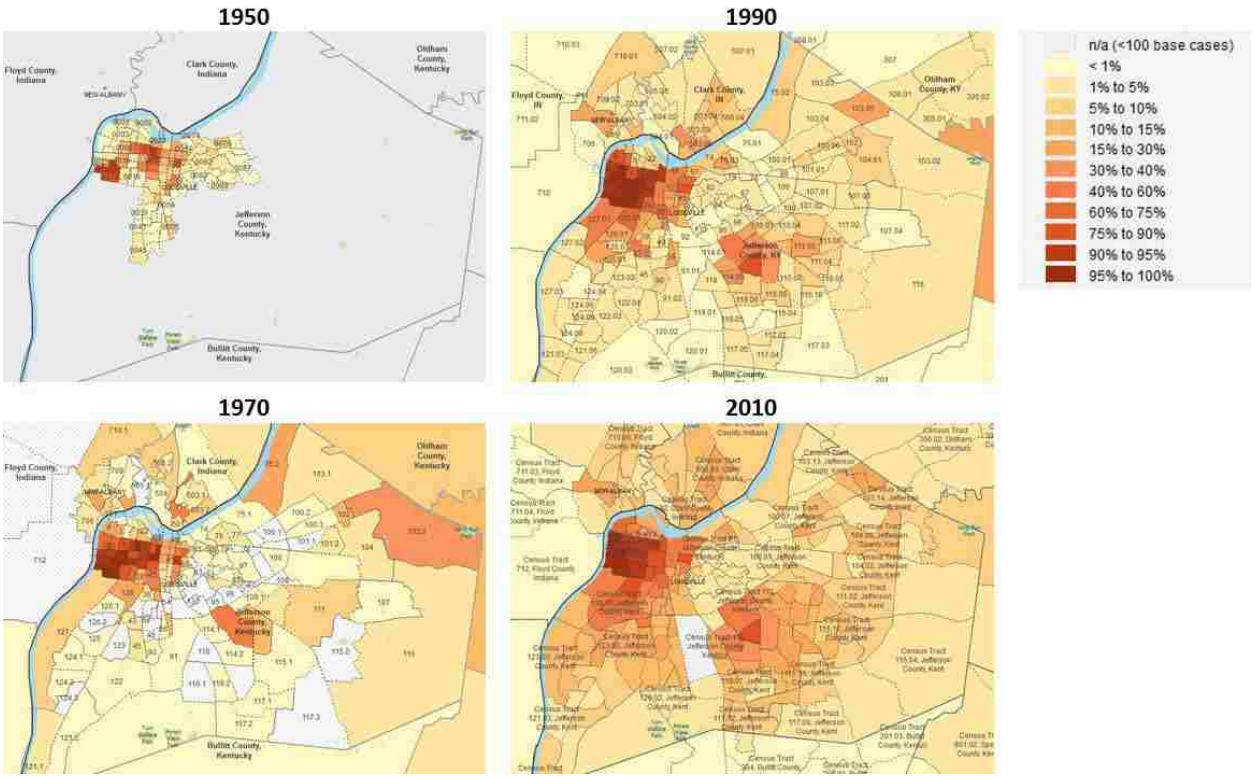


Figure 6.1: Percent black by census tract, from 1950-2010. Maps created using Social Explorer®

This trend of decreasing segregation in the suburbs is countered by a separate trend within the impoverished black neighborhoods of West Louisville. Within these neighborhoods, segregation continues to increase. The percentage of African Americans residing within these neighborhoods is approaching one hundred percent, a culmination of the patterns of white flight that began in the 1950s and escalated in the 1960s-1980s. Sociologists have referred to such neighborhoods as being "hypersegregated" or "hyperghetto", indicating the extreme levels of concentrated segregation and poverty, an extreme never before witnessed in Louisville.

The causes of continued segregation are many, and attempts to understand this ongoing phenomenon have been tried by social scientists, planners, economists, and cultural critics, among others. An overly-simplified explanation of lingering segregation is

that whites are simply "more willing to pay for housing in the vicinity of other whites than blacks are" (as explained by economics Professor Richard Muth to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Issues in Housing Discrimination in 1985). But as Ford (1992) points out, this merely begs the question of why whites will pay more to avoid living near blacks. He explains,

> "Even whites who are not averse to living in integrated neighborhoods and, indeed, may prefer such a setting, all other things being equal, will choose all-white neighborhoods because all other things are never equal… most blacks prefer a neighborhood with a substantial black population. It is not surprising, then, that they are unwilling to outbid whites for the dubious privilege of moving into white neighborhoods" (135).

By the 1990s in Louisville's West End, "hypersegregation" and "hyperghettoization" had resulted in a spatially concentrated and economically marginalized underclass nearly entirely composed of black Louisvillians. As Aubespin et al. (2011) describe,

> "Within a generation, the human landscape of black Louisville was redrawn as African Americans with middle class or higher incomes moved into all sections of the city and county, while Louisville's predominantly black neighborhoods became bedroom communities, places where people lived, but neither worked nor shopped. These neighborhoods were identifiable by race and class, with few community-based ammenities or institutions, other than churches" (232).

Hudson (2004) argues that while working and middle class African Americans in Louisville have been afforded better opportunities and choices for choosing where to live, those "who are both black and poor" have no such choice. In effect, this has resulted in "sections of the city west of Ninth Street (having) become terra incognita for most white Louisvillians" (Aubespin, Clay, and Hudson 2011, 259).

This review of socioeconomic patterns and processes offers a background perspective for describing how West Louisville was shaped and molded in the decades following the civil rights era. This racialized urban morphology (Schein 2012) also

provides context for understanding how and why residents of West Louisville approached, understood, and celebrated the Derby Festival differently than other parts of the city. As this chapter will analyze, by the late 1990s West Louisvillians felt under siege from the police department and the city at large. As was the case in the 1967, protests leading up to and including the Derby Festival rocked the city, bringing national attention to race related problems. By 2000, West Louisville also featured Derby cruising as its own unofficial offshoot the Festival, leading to heightened concerns over how a protest movement might manifest through the festival celebrations.

Police Violence and Protest

As Derby weekend 2000 approached, events and activities unrelated to the Derby itself had created an atmosphere of tension and uncertainty. For several years frustration had been building in West Louisville regarding police violence and brutality as a result of several high-profile incidents. The issue of police violence toward African American Louisvillians has been typical in the city, with a documented history dating back to the 1800s. Writing on the subject of police abuse of black Louisvillians in the late 1800s, Wright (1985) describes,

> "In many cities, violent mobs wreaked havoc with a vengeance on blacks with the tacit approval of the authorities. Louisville leaders, however, abhorred the thought of mob rule. Instead they used the police. A symbol of law and order, the police controlled blacks with the full approval of the city's legal apparatus. For a fifty-year period, starting in the 1880s, police abuse of blacks would be consistent, occurring whenever whites thought blacks were getting "out of their place." This remained a problem for so long because only on the rarest of occasions would the local courts prosecute police officers for assaulting blacks" (71).

As this section will demonstrate, Wright's depiction of police violence remained constant and became an untenable situation leading up to Derby weekend protests in 2000.

In the late 1990s, several high-profile incidents of police violence against African Americans in Louisville sowed the seeds for discord and protest in the community. In January 1998, Adrian Reynolds died of blunt-force trauma while incarcerated in the basement of the Jefferson County Hall of Justice. Five corrections officers were present at the time of the incident, and all claimed that they were intervening to prevent a suicide attempt by Reynolds. Reynolds, who by all accounts was resisting the officers' efforts, was dragged from his cell and savagely beaten while handcuffed (Wessel 2000). Witnesses described how one officer, Timothy Barnes, stomped Reynolds' head into the concrete floor, a blow which killed him. Barnes, who was white, was later indicted for murder by a grand jury. His initial trial resulted in a hung jury, and at a second trial, he was acquitted (Riley 2004a). In a subsequent civil suit, Jefferson County settled with the family of Reynolds to the sum of $350,000 (The Courier-Journal 2008).

On May 13, 1999, two police officers, both of whom were white, fatally shot 18 year old Desmond Rudolph as he tried to flee in a stolen car that he had already crashed into a telephone pole. Rudolph, who was unarmed, was shot at 22 times and hit 10 times. The police officers claimed self-defense, as Rudolph was trying to free the car from mud after striking the telephone pole, and the officers feared they might be struck by the vehicle. A grand jury declined to indict the two officers on criminal charges, though an internal police investigation revealed numerous errors the officers had made (Woolhouse 2003c). Years later, in 2002, the city settled a civil lawsuit with the family of the victim to the sum of $200,000 (Woolhouse 2003a).

These two incidents in Louisville shadowed nationally a controversial case in New York City involving a police shooting of an unarmed black man. On February 4, 1999,

Amadou Diallo, an immigrant from Guinea, was standing outside his apartment at night after returning home from work. Four non-uniformed white police officers pulled up in an unmarked car and moved toward Diallo, thinking he matched the description of a suspected rapist in the city. Diallo fled toward his apartment and was pursued by the officers. Diallo stopped at his door and reached into his jacket to pull out his wallet, possibly thinking he was being robbed or possibly just getting out identification after realizing the pursuers were police officers. One of the officers shouted "gun", thinking Diallo had pulled a gun from his jacket, and all four officers opened fire on Diallo, shooting 41 rounds and striking Diallo 19 times, including several shots through the soles of his shoes after he had fallen (Fritsch and Waldman 2000; Flynn 1999). Diallo was unarmed and innocent of any wrongdoing. Diallo's shooting led to a massive public outcry and protests at the NYC police headquarters. Some of these protests were led by Rev. Al Sharpton, who was one of many arrested for civil disobedience by blocking entrance to police headquarters (Rashbaum 2000). Though the NYPD found the officers had acted appropriately, the four officers were indicted by a Bronx grand jury for second-degree murder and reckless endangerment. Because of the massive protests involving the case, the trial was moved to upstate New York, where in February of 2000, the jury found the officers not-guilty of all charges (Fritsch 2000). The city later settled a civil suit with Diallo's family to the sum of $3 million (Feuer 2004).

In Louisville, nerves were still raw over the local police shootings when in March of 2000, tensions escalated significantly. At a police awards banquet, the two offending officers in the Desmond Rudolph shooting were awarded medals of exceptional valor from the Louisville Police Department. Community outrage over the awards was immediate and

severe. Mayor Dave Armstrong, feeling he had been blindsided by police administration with the awards, moved quickly and fired Police Chief Gene Sherrard on March 2, the day after the awards ceremony, for "violating the mayor's trust" (Clines 2000). Sherrard's firing set off a tidal wave of protest from within the police department. That same day on March 2, police officers and community supporters numbering in the hundreds marched on City Hall protesting Sherrard's firing and demanding Mayor Armstrong to step down. The march, led by the local Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) president McCubbins, was joined by the now former Chief Sherrard who spoke to the crowd and apologized for the award ceremony, saying "unfortunately I failed to anticipate some of the sentiments that may result" (Coleman-Bach 2000d). Sherrard also urged the police officers not to do anything to "discredit the department" (The Louisville Defender 2000b). As part of the march, nine police commanders stepped down from their posts and delivered their resignations in brown envelopes directly to Mayor Armstrong at City Hall (*New York Times* Sherrard 2000). In response to calls from the police to step down, Mayor Armstrong replied "There's one person the chief has to make happy and that's the elected representative of the people, and that did not take place. And so I removed him. It's not complicated" (Clines 2000).

At the same time the police were marching on City Hall, a separate march of nearly 800 was led by Rev. Louis Coleman to the 4th District police station in West Louisville (Coleman-Bach 2000d). Coleman was a local rights advocate and director of the Justice Resources Center. The march was fueled by community outrage over the awards given to the two officers involved in the Desmond Rudolph shooting. An editorial in the *Louisville Defender* referred to the awards as either "blatant insensitivity or an error in judgment"

(2000b). Joining in the march was the organization Citizens Against Police Abuse (CAPA), which had been formed in Louisville the previous year in response to police violence. CAPA's primary objectives were to stop police brutality and pressure the city into instituting a citizen review board of the police department.

The considerable unrest in Louisville began to receive national attention. This was fueled further when Mayor Armstrong was quoted in the *New York Times:* "a small group of folks on the police force… have a culture… that only adds to the hostility of minorities who feel they are being treated as second-class citizens, without respect" (as reported by The Louisville Defender 2000a). The mayor's quote led to further anger from the police department, and morale was reported be very low among officers. The arrest rate fell by 50 percent compared to statistics from the same time period of the previous year (Chambers 2000). The FOP was particularly defiant of the mayor and outspoken in their calls for him to step down. Another FOP march was announced for March 17, and over 2000 police officers and supporters joined to march on City Hall once again. This time Sherrard did not join the march, stating that his presence might send a "mixed message" and "escalate an already difficult situation" (Coleman-Bach 2000b). The officers who had received the medals which had set off the wave of protests returned their medals to the city. And in a show of solidarity, other officers who had also received medals at the same ceremony, including one African American officer, also returned their medals, saying the medals were "tarnished" (Coleman-Bach 2000c). In a sign, however, that the crisis may be subsiding, the nine police commanders who had stepped down agreed to return to their posts.

With the national attention also came increased scrutiny by national civil rights organizations toward the LPD. Rev. Jesse Jackson, leader of the national Rainbow/PUSH

Coalition, called for a federal probe of the LPD (Chambers 2000). In addition, Jackson announced he would be coming to the city to assess the situation and meet with affected groups. Jackson described the continuing marches by the police as "disgraceful" and "a national embarrassment to police departments everywhere" (Coleman-Bach 2000a). Reactions in the city to Jackson's planned visit were mixed. The mayor, still reeling from the police demonstrations calling for his ouster, flat out dismissed Jackson, refusing to meet with him and said the city did not need the help of "outsiders" (John and Smith 2000). *The Defender* was cautious toward Jackson, hopeful that he could spark "meaningful dialogue" but worried that his presence would "re-ignite another round of protest marches" (The Louisville Defender 2000c). Louisville's Interdenominational Ministerial Coalition (IMC), an influential group representing West Louisville's religious community, welcomed Jackson and helped arrange a rally entitled "The March Toward Destiny" to be led by Jackson on Easter Sunday, April 23.

The March Toward Destiny was joined by over 2000 supporters, about 90 percent of whom were reported as African American and about 10 percent as white (Coleman-Bach 2000g). The stated goals of the march were to support the institution of a citizen review board of the police department, end the practice of racial profiling by officers, push for the hiring of more women and minorities in the police department, and express opposition to the proposed city-county merger (McDonough and John 2000). This last issue of city and county merger referred to an upcoming vote to possibly merge the city of Louisville and Jefferson County governments into one overarching Metro Louisville structure. Many West Louisville leaders opposed merger on the grounds that the annexation of the mostly white suburban neighborhoods in the county would dilute the political voice of the

predominantly black West Louisville community in city governance. The march, whose route traversed 7th and 9th streets between two large churches in West Louisville, was described by a police spokesperson as "successful and peaceful."

BY JAMES H. WALLACE, THE COURIER-JOURNAL

The Rev. Jesse Jackson and local pastors linked arms yesterday. With Jackson were the Revs. Dennis Lyons of Full Gospel Missionary Baptist, far left, Charles Elliott of King Solomon Baptist, Kevin Cosby (in light cap) of St. Stephen Baptist and, right of Jackson, Louis Coleman.

Figure 6.2: Photo of the March Toward Destiny (McDonough and John 2000).

Despite the large turnout for the rally, some segments of West Louisville's black community were not overly impressed with Jackson's March Toward Destiny. A group identifying itself as the Black Radical Congress disrupted a service at the onset of the rally (Coleman-Bach 2000g). The group's leader took the microphone to address the crowd, arguing that the religious leaders in charge of organizing the rally were more interested in protecting their own community power and influence than working for meaningful change. At the urging of rally organizers, he was removed from the microphone by a police officer, and his removal brought applause from the crowd. Outside the service, though, protests continued. Another protesting member of the Black Radical Congress was particularly

critical of the location of the rally, saying "When the FOP marched, they went to downtown without a permit and let the mayor know where they stood. I have more respect for them than I do for these people. Jesse Jackson will give a speech, people will disperse and that will be it" (Smith and John 2000).

In the wake of Jackson's March Toward Destiny, tensions between the city government, the mayor, and the West Louisville's religious leadership seemed to relax. The city announced its finalists for the new police chief position, all of whom were from within the department. Underneath the surface, though, tempers were still simmering. As Derby Week approached, once again the Derby Festival became the platform upon which protest groups sought to increase pressure on the city to enact meaningful change. And the increased media presence, both locally and beyond, was used to project a political voice to a wider, national audience. CAPA was particularly active in this regard. For the 2000 Pegasus Parade, CAPA protested the event by creating an eleven-foot puppet of a victim of police abuse to be demonstrated near the parade. CAPA members picketed outside Churchill Downs and held up signs demanding police reform on Central Avenue overpasses leading up to the "VIP entrance" to Churchill Downs. Additionally, CAPA distributed fliers on out-of-town cars parked at the airport and at Churchill Downs that read "Welcome to Louisville Where Police Abuse Is Tolerated" (Carter 2001).

At the urging of Rev. Louis Coleman, CAPA, and other police reform activists, another rally was organized, this time to be held on Oaks Day, which is the day before Derby Day (Coleman-Bach 2000f). Activists from outside the city announced their intentions to join this rally, including Rev. Al Sharpton, Dick Gregory, and Martin Luther King III. The rally was organized in response to the city's continued failure to address the

concerns of the community regarding police abuse. In particular, the rally intended to further pressure the city to create a citizen review board for the police department. Seeking to quell community demonstrations, the Board of Aldermen announced that they would move a proposed citizen review board ordinance to vote scheduled for May 9, the week after Derby (John 2000). Still, both Mayor Armstrong and Aldermen President Steve Magre were outspoken in their opposition to the ordinance (Shafer 2000).

Despite the national presence for the "Rally for Equality, Fairness and Justice", much of West Louisville's leadership was lukewarm to the idea. The IMC announced they would not participate (Tangonan and John 2000). *The Defender* was equally ambivalent to the march, arguing "Over the last six weeks, thousands have taken to the streets in a revival of old-line 1960s political activism. While this proves that free speech and the right to assemble are still in effect, what do these marches really accomplish?… Why can't we get beyond the protest stage and onto the resolution stage?" (The Louisville Defender 2000d) The *Courier-Journal* was even more critical of the rally, challenging the moral standing of Rev. Sharpton and saying "This is the wrong time. These are the wrong tactics" (The Courier-Journal 2000b). The rally was held at Memorial Park in Old Louisville just south of downtown and drew about 100 protesters (Carter 2001). At the rally, Dick Gregory promised a disruption of the next year's Derby in 2001 if police reform did not occur. Sharpton warned that if demand were not met by the city, "we will be on the track when the horses come out" (Schaver and Carter 2000). Though the rally received considerable media attention, it did not pack the punch of some of the previous rallies, largely due to the lack of endorsement and participation from West Louisville leadership.

The Emergence of Cruising

Concerns of civic unrest shifted toward West Broadway, where Derby cruising had by now taken off to the point of drawing tens of thousands to the streets to party. With the political climate in Louisville as it was in regards to police protest, Derby cruising, many feared, had all the ingredients to fuel conflict on a large scale. On the one hand, there was a restive West Louisville population on edge from recent police violence. On the other hand was the police force, still reeling from widespread criticism and the abrupt firing of the police chief. Many West Louisvillians felt that police officers assigned to West Broadway for Derby weekend resented having to be there, as if Derby cruising was an illegitimate activity performed by a marginalized population. Add to this mix the thousands of Derby cruisers, many of whom were teenagers and young adults, and some of which came from out of town, and the party atmosphere that included alcohol, drugs, and loud music. A quote from one resident interviewed for this dissertation speaks to the palpable tension in the air as Derby neared:

> "Police was mad because they fired Sherrard. Black police was mad because they hadn't been promoted past Sergeant in 12 years. The community was mad because of Sherrard giving that medal. So you got some mad police. White police was mad because Sherrard got fired. Black policemen was mad because they can't get promoted. The community was mad. So you got a bomb going off."

Aldermen President Magre made a request to the Governor to send in National Guard troops to help keep order, but the Governor indicated that such a request could only come from the mayor, and Armstrong had no intentions of making such a request (Tangonan and John 2000). Also anticipating potential problems, West Louisville community leaders, including the IMC, began an effort to recruit volunteers to help monitor the situation on West Broadway on Derby weekend. Originally, the effort was intended to

mainly monitor the police amid fears that officers would enact retribution on Derby cruising revelers in light of the ongoing police protests. However, as word got out about the group's efforts, the police administration reached out to the group and requested assistance and collaboration from the volunteers to help prevent dicey situations from escalating. The group began calling themselves the Derby City Ambassadors, and by Derby weekend about 255 volunteers had signed up for the weekend (Tangonan 2000b). Most, but not all, of the volunteers were older black West Louisville residents who felt their presence during Derby cruising would relax tensions. The Ambassadors vowed to use "gentle tactics" to approach young partyers whose behavior may be approaching the limits of acceptability. One ambassador explained in an interview, "As a rule, in our community, most young people respond well if addressed in a non-combative manner." Ambassadors donned bright yellow t-shirts and hats so as to be easily identifiable by both the partyers and the police. The police also provided them with cell phones and a number to call in case any situations escalated beyond their control. CAPA, whose organization was located at the Braden Center on West Broadway, offered their building as a command center of sorts for the Ambassadors (Schaver 2001). By acting as a buffer between cruisers on Broadway and the police, the Ambassadors hoped to serve the dual purpose of discouraging police violence on the cruisers as well as preventing civil unrest in west Louisville from flaring up into something worse.

With a force of over 300 police officers, 250 or more Derby City Ambassadors, and the usage of roadblocks to control traffic, Derby weekend came and passed without any major incidents in 2000 (Wessel and Hall 2000). In addition to offering the Braden Center as a command post for the Ambassadors, CAPA worked to try and transform Derby

cruising into less of a car show and more of a community wide block party. To this end, they set up grills and gave out 3000 hot dogs and refreshments that had been donated by the supermarket chain Kroger for the weekend (Schaver 2001). The Ambassadors proved to have a calming effect on both the Derby cruisers and the police. In general, police officers stayed back and allowed Ambassadors to handle minor incidents of people behaving badly. In one instance, a local hip-hop group had decided to film a music video for Derby cruising. A crowd gathered and spilled onto the street, blocking traffic. As police officers approached the crowd, tempers began to flair. But fortunately a nearby group of Ambassadors was able to both call back the police officers and convince the crowd to peacefully move off the street (Tangonan 2000a). The Ambassadors approach to tempering situations proved to be invaluable, and was only possible because of two things: (1) they were largely comprised of black West Louisville community members, and thus more likely to be respected by the partying youths, and (2) their organization and tactics were endorsed by police administration, and officers on the ground had to respect their ability to operate independently. As one community organizer explained:

> "Let's have an intermediary group that's friends with the police and also a part of the community. Let's get trained by the police so we'll have their respect, but also we can communicate to our people. So, the black community was, during that year, angry at the police. The police was angry. So it was like a standoff. So the Derby City ambassadors was like, the police, y'all do the traffic. Let the Derby City Ambassadors kind of work with the people. And that stopped it from becoming, because the Ambassadors was there."

The biggest problem for Derby weekend, as it turned out, was for West Louisville residents who wanted to be able to freely drive to and from their neighborhoods. The police had tried to come up with a plan to keep traffic moving on West Broadway during cruising by making the entire road one-way and setting up roadblocks at crossing streets. The

problem came when West Louisville residents got stuck in the traffic and then blocked from entering their own neighborhoods, and instead rerouted by police miles away from their intended destination. Numerous stories began emerging of residents trying to return home during the night only to be funneled by police onto the interstate in the opposite direction and miles away from their homes (Coleman-Bach 2000e). Businesses along West Broadway were also upset by the police handling of the situation, arguing that by blocking the crossing roads and parking lots as well, no one was able to reach their businesses. Several restaurants reported significant losses in income as a result (Hershberg and Holbrook 2000). Police officer attitudes toward motorists was described as "hostile" and "aggressive", and some felt the response was a form of police retaliation on West Louisville (The Louisville Defender 2000e). Community outcry from the traffic management led to hearings, and eventually changes in the way Derby cruising would be handled in future years .

Having survived Derby weekend without any more embarrassing incidents, city leaders breathed a sigh of relief. An editorial in the *Courier-Journal* speaks to this:

> "Louisville has eased past the potential dangers of Derby Week, but it wasn't easy. An ill-timed, ill-focused protest, led by an incendiary outsider, could have turned Oaks Day into major disruption. Or the police effort to control weekend revelry along Broadway could have sparked something worse. But when the sun rose yesterday over Churchill Downs backside, nobody had gotten hurt" (The Courier-Journal 2000a).

As it had been some 30 years or so prior, the *Courier-Journal* was very critical of any form of protests that might tarnish the Kentucky Derby Festival's reputation. And once again, the editorial tried to single out the presence of an "incendiary outsider", in this case Rev. Al Sharpton, as the instigator of discord in the city.

The police protests of 2000 had culminated with the Oaks Day Rally. Shortly after Derby weekend on May 9, the Board of Aldermen passed an ordinance instituting a citizen review board with subpoena power over the police force (The Louisville Defender 2000f). As he had promised all along, Mayor Armstrong vetoed the ordinance, but the Board somehow mustered up enough votes to override his veto. In the end, though, it turned out to be a hollow victory for police reform advocates. Despite passage of the ordinance, the newly created citizen review board was never funded by the city. Further, the proposed city-county merger was approved in the 2000 election, signaling a shift in future city politics. With the merger, the citizen review board, whose subpoena power was already being challenged by a law suit despite having never been used, became an afterthought. Mayor Armstrong did not emerge from the tumultuous events of 2000 strongly, and he did not even run for reelection in the 2002 mayoral race. He was replaced by Jerry Abramson, who is sometimes referred to as Louisville's "mayor for life." Abramson had served the limit of three terms as mayor from 1986 to 1999 before Armstrong and was deemed re-eligible to run for mayor after the city-county merger. He won again easily in the 2002 election with over 70 percent of the vote.

2000 was the only year in which frustration from police violence threatened to spill over into Derby weekend protests and disruptions. This was not, however, necessarily because police violence ended. Later that year, Rodney Abernathy, a 37 year old black man, was confronted by four black police officers in Chickasaw Park. Abernathy, who was a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic, was found by officers in a pool of blood resulting from self-inflicted head wounds with a tire jack. The four officers were unable to subdue Abernathy, who also lunged at and "chased" one of the officers. In response, the officer

fired 22 rounds at Abernathy, even pausing to reload between rounds (Woolhouse 2003d). Despite his numerous wounds, including a fractured pelvis, two broken arms, 14 gunshot wounds, and substantial loss of blood, Abernathy tried to stand up again. At this point a second officer walked up to Abernathy and fired a single shot directly into his head, killing him. Investigators later ruled the incident a "suicide by cop", and a grand jury declined to indict. In a civil case, however, the City of Louisville settled a lawsuit to the sum of $600,000 to the family of Abernathy (Woolhouse 2003d).

In January 2001, Clifford Lewis, an 18 year old black man, was fatally shot and killed by police in a case of mistaken identity. An undercover police unit thought they had found a wanted suspect parked in his van, but instead had found Lewis, the suspect's cousin. Lewis, who was in the van with his girlfriend, had stopped to buy cigarettes when a group of non-uniformed officers in unmarked cars swarmed his van with guns drawn. Lewis, thinking he was being carjacked, tried to flee and struck one of the officers with the van. A second officer pursued the van on foot and fired multiple rounds, hitting Lewis. The van swerved across the road and crashed into a house. The officer ran up and fired several more shots into the van, killing Lewis. An investigation of the incident revealed multiple egregious errors by the arresting officers. However, a grand jury declined to indict (Wolfson 2003a).

One month later, in February of 2001, Antwan Bryant was shot and killed by a police officer as he rode in the back seat of a car (Adams and Wolfson 2003). The driver of the car had decided to flee a traffic stop being performed by non-uniformed officers in an unmarked car, and in doing so the vehicle had struck the leg of one of the officers. The other officer fired three shots at the car as it drove off, killing Bryant in the back seat. An

internal police review concluded that the officers had acted appropriately, and no charges were filed.

In December 2002, James Taylor, a fifty year old black man, was shot 11 times and killed at his apartment by a police officer responding to a disorder (Wolfson 2003b). Even though Taylor's hands were cuffed behind his back at the time of the shooting, the officer claimed self-defense arguing that Taylor, who was drunk and high on cocaine at the time, had lunged at him with a box cutter. A Jefferson County grand jury later declined to indict the officer.

In all, between June 2000 and January 2002, there were six fatal shootings by police officers in Louisville (Wolfe and Woolhouse 2003). In the aftermath of the Taylor shooting, demonstrations against police violence erupted once again and became widespread, including twelve straight days of protest outside police headquarters in December 2002 which led to the arrest of seventeen demonstrators, including the Rev. Louis Coleman (Shafer 2002). Consistent pressure on the city by activists, led by both the Justice Resource Center and CAPA, finally led the city to institute meaningful changes regarding the administration of the police force. These changes were spearheaded by the returning Mayor Abramson who returned to office beginning in January of 2003.

One of Abramson's first and most important actions was the hiring of the city's first African American police chief, Robert White, who replaced the retiring chief, Greg Smith (Tangonan 2002). Smith, who had replaced the ousted chief Sherrard in 2000, was one of the nine police commanders who had stepped down from his post to protest Sherrard's firing. As an LPD insider, Smith's hiring had soothed the tempers of police officers but upset police reform advocates who wanted someone brought in from the

outside to clean up the department. Smith had come under fire in 2001 after it was revealed that the department had covered up an incident where an officer had wrecked his car into a parked car downtown, and then fled the scene. The officer was never questioned by an investigator nor given a field sobriety test. When the story was leaked to the press, the suspected informant was suspended by Smith. This story was depicted in the media as evidence of the "Blue Code" of silence that continued to plague the department (Woolhouse 2003b). The new Police Chief White was brought in from outside the city, where he had been previously chief of police in Greensboro NC, as part of an effort to institute more transparency and accountability within the department. One of Chief White's most important policy changes was the increased emphasis on community policing, where beat officers become better familiar with the neighborhoods and residents where they patrol. White was quoted "I am a great proponent of officers having direct communication with citizens. . . . Whenever possible we plan to have our officers get out of their cars and spend more time interacting with the community" (Woolhouse 2003b).

Shortly after Chief White's hiring in January 2003, the city also announced, at the urging of anti-police violence activists, that it would revisit the idea of a citizen review panel to monitor controversial police incidents. In February, Mayor Jerry Abramson announced the creation of the Citizens Commission on Police Accountability which would be responsible for reviewing all incidents of police violence and recommending changes in police policy. The mayor was quoted "These changes will not bring back lost lives. They will not restore ruined careers, but these reforms are honest and hopeful efforts to create a better, safer, more accountable system for both police officers and citizens" (Gerth 2003b). The mayor also created a new Public Integrity Unit within the police department

that would be composed of police administrators. The Unit would be responsible for investigating incidents of police violence and fatal shootings by officers. Previously, all such incidents had been investigated by detectives within the department. In addition to the creation of the two new committees, the city also announced retraining for officers and changes in policy regarding the use of force (Woolhouse 2003a). All officers would now carry non-lethal weapons, such as batons and pepper spray, as a primary means for subduing suspects resisting arrest. All officers would also be required to complete training in "ethical decision making, handling the mentally ill, defusing explosive situations, protecting civil rights, recognizing cultural differences and preserving civility" (Gerth 2003a).

Despite the creation of the new Commission and other changes, activists were not happy with the lack of opportunity to provide input into the new ordinance. The mayor had effectively announced the proposal overnight, and it was approved the next day by the Louisville Metro Council. A spokesperson for CAPA was quoted "While the current situation in the community is a crisis, we have to ask, why is this ordinance being rushed through the Metro Council? A democratic process for community decision-making doesn't work that way" (Gerth 2003a). The Commission was not given subpoena power to question officers involved in questionable incidents, and some viewed it as more of public relations ploy rather than representative of any meaningful change (Gerth 2003b). The mayor emphasized that the city would seek to install Commission members who were "not on the extremes" of the issue of police violence, singling out for exclusion activists such as the Rev. Louis Coleman (Gerth 2003b).

In Spring of 2003, Chief White announced further changes to police policy regarding the use of force. The new policy states the intent to "recognize the importance of human life, respect basic human rights, and have an intolerant attitude toward abusive treatment of all persons. Bearing this in mind, officers' use of force will be value driven, utilizing only the force reasonable under the circumstances so as to minimize the chance of injury to themselves and others" (Woolhouse 2003a). The new, more restrictive, policy strongly emphasized non-lethal measures for subduing suspects resisting arrest except for extreme circumstances where the officer's life is in danger. One of the biggest measures was a change in policy restricting officers from firing shots at or from a moving vehicle, unless officers themselves are being fired upon. Further policy changes were made based upon recommendations provided by the newly created Citizens Commission on Police Accountability (Halladay 2003).

Despite the changes in police administration and policy, there were more incidences of police violence. In January 2004, a drug sting involving an undercover officer went wrong, resulting in the shooting death of 18 year old Michael Newby (Riley 2004c). Newby and two associates, all of whom were black, had apparently robbed the white undercover detective, McKenzie Mattingly, of his drug buying money as he sat in his car. As the robbers fled, Newby stopped to pick up a dropped $20 bill, when Mattingly exited his vehicle to try and apprehend the suspect. The two struggled for a bit, before Newby broke free and tried to run away. As he did so, Mattingly steadied himself and shot four times, striking Newby three times in the back and killing him. When police backup arrived at the scene, they found Newby in possession of drugs and a gun, though the gun had never been drawn nor was Mattingly even aware of its existence. Immediately after firing on

Newby, Mattingly reportedly dropped his gun and put his hands on his head, as if acknowledging he deserved to be arrested. Other witnesses at the scene reportedly were so distraught and angry at the officers, that they were flinging insults and objects in protest of Newby being shot in the back as he had fled (Riley 2004e). As a result of the incident, Mattingly was fired from the department and charged with murder, manslaughter and reckless homicide (Halladay 2006d). He was later acquitted of these charges by a Jefferson Circuit Court jury, but the city settled a civil suit with Newby's family to the sum of $250,000 (Wolfson 2008).

Newby's shooting death is reflective of the difficulty involved with instituting effective and meaningful police tactical policies. Though Newby was by no means an innocent bystander - he had robbed the undercover officer and was in possession of drugs and a handgun, the specifics of the situation did not dictate him being shot in the back and killed by the officer, who was no longer in harm's way at the time of the shooting. Despite this incident, though, police abuse in Louisville did gradually begin to decline after Chief White's hiring in 2003. This is likely a result of the institutional changes recommended by the Citizens Commission on Police Accountability and instituted by White which stressed the use of non-lethal force, better community engagement, and more transparency within the department.

Outcomes

> "There can be no artistic breakthrough or social progress without some form of crisis in civilization - a crisis usually generated by organizations or collectivities that convince ordinary people to put their bodies and lives on the line. There is, of course, no guarantee that such pressure will yield the result one wants, but there is a guarantee that the status quo will remain or regress if no pressure is applied at all" (West 1990).

It took several years for the protests of the Spring of 2000 to reach victory, but finally in 2003, change was accomplished. This change began with the election of Mayor Abramson for the newly merged Louisville-Jefferson County government. Within the first month of Abramson's return to office, he had hired a new police chief, Robert White, who was not only the city's first African American police chief but was also hired from outside the department to respond to heavy criticism of the LPD's fierce protection of the "thin blue line." By the end of the second month of Abramson's term, he had created a civilian review board for the police department which, though it did not have the much sought after subpoena power, was nonetheless a positive step in the right direction. With the new police chief and civilian review board in place, the LPD finally overhauled its policies regarding, among other things, the use of lethal force by police officers. The emphasis on community policing also helped foster more positive relations with West Louisville community leaders and activists, who had long felt at battle with the police department. The establishment of the Derby City Ambassadors by West Louisville leaders, and the official recognizance given to the Ambassadors by the LPD, also helped ease tensions in the community, especially as they pertained to Derby weekend on West Broadway. Over a decade later after their formation in 2000, the Derby City Ambassadors remain a positive force in the West Louisville community.

The protest movement that began in 2000 can be compared to the open housing protests of 1967. In 2000, West Louisville activists, having learned from the Derby Festival protests of 1967, adopted similar tactics of latching on to Derby events in order increase public exposure to their cause. The sequence of events leading up to and involving Derby weekend in 2000 in many ways resemble the trajectory of events as they transpired

during the 1967 protests. Along these lines, there are five distinct areas of similarities that bear recognition:

- Protest movements: In both cases, the West Louisville community coalesced around a particular social movement - in 1967 it was the struggle for open housing and in 2000 it was the demand for police reform and the elimination of police abuse. In both cases, there was also a significant backlash, or opposing protest movement, fighting to preserve the status quo. In 1967, this consisted of white "hecklers", as they were referred to by the local media, who assaulted and abused non-violent African American protesters in an attempt to maintain white privilege through residential segregation. In 2000, this consisted of police supporters who rejected any questioning of police tactics and dismissed any notions of racial profiling and uneven enforcement by officers.
- Political resistance: In both cases, the city's political leadership opposed changes demanded by the protest movements. In April of 1967, the Louisville board of aldermen voted to reject an open housing ordinance which was at the center of the controversy. In May of 2000, the Louisville metro council actually passed a measure to create a civilian review board of the police force. This was vetoed by the mayor, but the veto was again overruled by the council. Still, despite these successes, the board was never actually formed or funded, and eventually went by the wayside with the city-county merger.
- Derby and protest: In both 1967 and 2000, the Derby Festival became the platform upon which the protest movements projected their voices to a wider national audience. In 1967, Festival events were canceled, actual horse races early in the week were disrupted, and there were repeated warnings that the Derby itself would be disrupted if the city did not respond to the protesters' demands. Similarly in 2000, activists picketed and protested

Derby events, and in particular focused on out of town visitors as the recipients of their message. An Oaks Day rally was held, with promises to disrupt the following year's Derby if things did not change.

- Derby, itself, is left alone: Despite repeated threats to disrupt Derby in 1967, the protests were called off by Martin Luther King Jr. just hours before the Derby. This decision was contested among the protesters, many of whom were more than willing to carry through with the threat. In the wake of Derby 1967, the protest movement fizzled and victory seemed out of reach. In 2000, after months of protests and rallies, officials and community leaders feared considerable conflict and clashes between the police and Derby cruisers on Derby weekend. Through the assistance of the Derby City Ambassadors, violence was largely avoided. In the wake of Derby 2000, despite nominal changes made by the city, police violence continued and meaningful change seemed out of reach.
- Eventual political victory: In both 1967 and 2000, the protest movements did eventually realize meaningful change in the city. In the November election of 1967, the intransigent board of aldermen was voted out of office and replace by a new, more sympathetic board, who quickly passed an open housing ordinance. For the 2000 protests, victories were more eventual. After several years of languishing and amid further police controversy, finally in 2003 a civilian review board was actually created and put to work. This was accomplished through the election of a new (or returning) mayor and the hiring of an African American police chief who, through the assistance of the review board, instituted meaningful policies in the department regarding the use of community policing, lethal force and racial profiling.

These last two chapters have examined the importance of the Kentucky Derby Festival to African American protest movements in Louisville. In both cases presented, the protest movements originated well-apart from the festival, but as Derby time neared, the protest movements were able to leverage the higher visibility and wider media exposure afforded by the festival. These chapters have demonstrated the effectiveness of using festival as a platform for protest movements. In the following chapters, other festival-related themes of transgression, belonging, and representation will be more fully explored within the context of Derby cruising in West Louisville.

CHAPTER 7: THE GOLDEN YEARS OF DERBY CRUISING

In the years following 2000, Derby cruising became more of an established annual festival in West Louisville. The protests and turmoil of 2000 had passed without any major incidents relating specifically to cruising on Derby weekend, and an informal truce developed between the city and West Louisville. As part of this truce, the city encouraged West Louisville leadership to get more involved with the Derby weekend activities on West Broadway, sanctioning the establishment of a vendor's fair along closed sections of West Broadway directly in the center of the usual cruising festivities. West Louisville business and community leaders seized on the opportunity to attempt to remake Derby cruising into something more than just a youth-centered event.

Because of the relative peace achieved between Derby cruising revelers and the city, the years between 2001 and 2005 offer fertile ground for exploring how Derby cruising became a site for the performances of and contestations over identity and representation from within the West Louisville community. One half of this equation concerns the relationship between festival and transgression. A Bakhtinian analysis of festival, encapsulated through the term "carnivalesque", entails interpreting the transgressive elements of festival as an act of resistance to the established social norms (Bakhtin 1968). For Bakhtin, festival created an opportunity for marginalized populations to escape from the rigors and societal controls put in place by the dominant class. Festival practices, in the forms of "festive laughter" and "grotesque realism", invert the societal hierarchy, making a mockery of the status quo and liberating the people from its confines. However, because festival time is delineated and limited temporally, so too are the transgressive and resistant capabilities of festival achieved only fleetingly. Some

Bakhtinian scholars of festival, however, have cautioned against overreaching with Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque. Festival practices in contemporary Western society have been often noted as "commodified" (Green 2007) or "Disneyfied", rendering the political potentiality of festival lifeless (Ravenscroft and Gilchrist 2009; Ravenscroft and Matteucci 2003). In this argument, the transgressive practices of festival participants are defined and confined by the dominant class, and festival practices more accurately legitimate the wider social structure and elide the true carnivalesque (Elias 1978). In effect, this understanding of carnivalesque results in a double-tension: on the one hand, there is a tension between transgression and co-option; on the other hand there is a tension between fleeting and permanent change achieved through the carnivalesque.

Whereas the previous two chapters explored more closely the tension in the carnivalesque between fleeting and permanent change, this chapter situates Derby cruising more closely within the tension over festival transgression and/or co-option. This discussion is furthered through considering the particularities of this festival in this place. For example, a theme commonly raised by multiple interviewees for this dissertation centered on the role of hip-hop culture in defining how Derby cruising evolved and transpired. At its core, hip-hop culture is inherently transgressive in nature, flaunting many of the rules and regulations of the white mainstream.

> "As an expressive art form, the hip-hop genre has served to counter conventional hegemony with its irreverent rhetoric, attire, musicality and movement. Yet commonly, via the manipulation of dynamic racial and economic group-based identities, hip-hop personas paradoxically both strive for inclusion in and mitigation of hegemonic social structure." (Powell 2011, 460)

As such, this chapter explores the role of hip-hop culture in Derby cruising as described by former cruisers.

Ultimately, the transgressive nature of Derby cruising became a point of contention in West Louisville. Many African Americans in the older generations generally frowned upon what were viewed as inappropriate behaviors in the public setting of the streets. Such carnivalesque behaviors, oftentimes in the form of public consumption of alcohol or drugs or public displays of sexuality and lewdness, were considered as representing the West Louisville community poorly. To try to counteract this, West Louisville business leaders established a more family-oriented vendor's fair to appeal to a wider audience. The vendor's fair featured such things as live gospel music and professional vendors selling food and wares from around the world. Though the vendor's fair was meant to bring more "respectability" to the West Louisville Derby celebration, it should be noted that few African American leaders openly condemned Derby cruising. The tension over how the Derby festivities should be performed was generally held internally.

This chapter explores the themes of identity and representation through the dual themes of transgression and community building. These themes are explored through the lens of a cultural politics of difference regarding how the individual practices of Derby cruising were understood differently as representative of the community. Using insights obtained from interviews of Derby cruising participants, this chapter explores how Derby cruising existed ambivalently as a part of and yet opposed to the Kentucky Derby Festival.

Derby Cruising Evolves

For a few years after 2000, Derby cruising seemed to have gained a reluctant - or at least resigned - acceptance from city officials. In 2001, the city made several efforts to respond to calls for more formalized Derby weekend activities that catered to black Louisvillians. Following the suggestion of the Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and

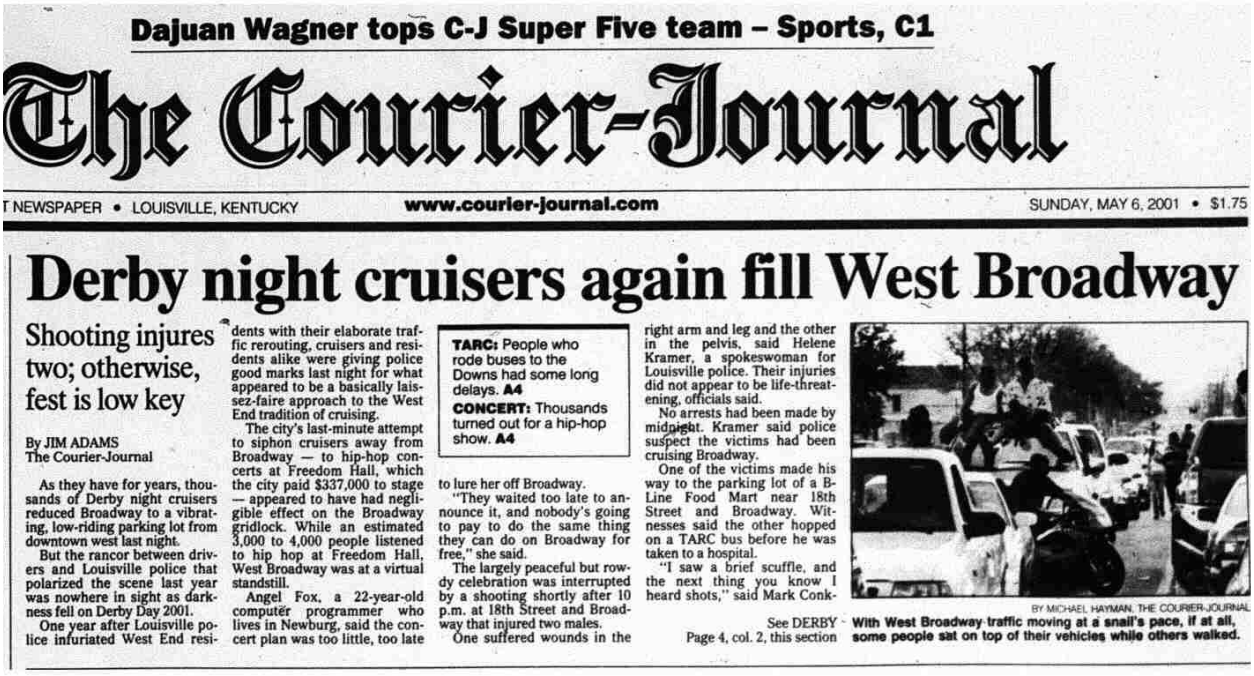
Political Oppression, the city helped organize a vendor's fair to be held along a closed section of West Broadway between 28th and 34th streets on the usual cruising route (Holbrook and Hershberg 2001). The vendor's fair would serve two purposes: first it would give the city a legitimate excuse for closing a section of West Broadway, and thusly discouraging automobile cruising; second it would give west Louisville residents a more formalized space for celebrating Derby weekend. To promote the vendor's fair, the city sponsored musical acts to perform at the closed section of West Broadway between 32nd and 34th streets, as well as a number of festivities to be held during the afternoon in Shawnee and Chickasaw parks. By and large, these events intended to create more of a "family-friendly" atmosphere along West Broadway for Derby weekend. A second effort made to curb cruising in 2001 by the city's Metro Council was the sponsoring of a significant Rap/Hip-Hop concert to be held at Freedom Hall on Derby night featuring several notable national acts, including DMX and Trick Daddy (Batcheldor and John 2001). The concert was intended to attract African American youth and young adults and subsequently reduce the popularity of Derby cruising. A third effort by the city was to relax the police monitoring and control of traffic for Derby cruising. Police instead took a laissez faire approach, allowing traffic congestion to build as it might, and by and large just observing the crowd of pedestrians as long as the situation remained peaceful.

These efforts by the city had mixed results. On Derby weekend, reports of over 200,000 vehicles arrived in West Louisville to participate in Derby cruising (Holbrook and Hershberg 2001). The vendor's fair was by all accounts a success, as African American merchants were provided a formalized space to sell food, clothes, music, accessories, and other wares to pedestrians. Residents were also pleased with the relaxed police presence

regarding traffic (Kenning 2001). While congestion was of course still a major problem, cars were at least not redirected for miles away from their intended destinations as they had been in the previous year. Residents, now fully aware of and expecting the massive influx of auto and pedestrian traffic on West Broadway, planned accordingly to avoid the area if possible. There were few reports of angry residents being treated poorly by police officers, and there were also few incidents of clashes between Broadway cruisers and the police (Adams 2001). West Broadway businesses, overall, were also more pleased with the hands-off approach by police, as more people were able to access their businesses.

Arrests along West Broadway decreased fourfold from the previous year, down from 82 to 19 on Derby night, and nearly three-fourths of the arrests were misdemeanor public intoxication charges (Holbrook and Hershberg 2001). Overall police presence was also down from 300 the previous year to 220 in 2001. By and large, police were more tolerant of deviant behavior, as long as it did not endanger public safety. The *Courier-Journal* reported police videotaping but not intervening in such activities as public consumption of alcohol by car passengers, people sitting or lying on the hoods of moving cars, cars blocking intersections or creeping through red lights, and pedestrians weaving in and out through barely moving traffic (Kenning 2001). The police videotaping was said to be for "internal purposes." The weekend was marred somewhat by a shooting involving two young black adults, both of whom were from Cincinnati, but the injuries fortunately were not life-threatening. The weekend otherwise was described as somewhat more subdued, especially because of the presence of the vendor's fair to break up traffic (Holbrook and Hershberg 2001).

The city-sponsored hip-hop concerts at Freedom Hall, however, were a complete flop. Attendance for the concerts fell far below hoped for levels, and the city subsequently lost approximately $260,000 from putting on the concerts (Shafer 2001b). Less than 5,000 tickets were sold for the concerts, far less than the 22,000 needed sold in order to break even. If the concerts had any effect toward lessening the numbers of cruisers on West Broadway, it was not apparent. As evidence of the growing attention Broadway cruising was receiving on Derby weekend, in the regular Sunday edition of the *Courier-Journal*, the top story on the front page was on Derby cruising (Figure 5). All news related to the actual horse race at Churchill Downs were contained within a leading but separate special section of the newspaper.



Dajuan Wagner tops C-J Super Five team – Sports, C1

The Courier-Journal

T NEWSPAPER • LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY www.courier-journal.com SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2001 • $1.75

Derby night cruisers again fill West Broadway

Shooting injures two; otherwise, fest is low key

By JIM ADAMS
The Courier-Journal

As they have for years, thousands of Derby night cruisers reduced Broadway to a vibrating, low-riding parking lot from downtown west last night.

But the rancor between drivers and Louisville police that polarized the scene last year was nowhere in sight as darkness fell on Derby Day 2001.

One year after Louisville police infuriated West End residents with their elaborate traffic rerouting, cruisers and residents alike were giving police good marks last night for what appeared to be a basically laissez-faire approach to the West End tradition of cruising.

The city's last-minute attempt to siphon cruisers away from Broadway — to hip-hop concerts at Freedom Hall, which the city paid $337,000 to stage — appeared to have had negligible effect on the Broadway gridlock. While an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 people listened to hip hop at Freedom Hall, West Broadway was at a virtual standstill.

Angel Fox, a 22-year-old computer programmer who lives in Newburg, said the concert plan was too little, too late to lure her off Broadway.

"They waited too late to announce it, and nobody's going to pay to do the same thing they can do on Broadway for free," she said.

The largely peaceful but rowdy celebration was interrupted by a shooting shortly after 10 p.m. at 18th Street and Broadway that injured two males.

One suffered wounds in the right arm and leg and the other in the pelvis, said Helene Kramer, a spokeswoman for Louisville police. Their injuries did not appear to be life-threatening, officials said.

No arrests had been made by midnight. Kramer said police suspect the victims had been cruising Broadway.

One of the victims made his way to the parking lot of a B-Line Food Mart near 18th Street and Broadway. Witnesses said the other hopped on a TARC bus before he was taken to a hospital.

"I saw a brief scuffle, and the next thing you know I heard shots," said Mark Conk-

See DERBY - Page 4, col. 2, this section

TARC: People who rode buses to the Downs had some long delays. **A4**

CONCERT: Thousands turned out for a hip-hop show. **A4**

BY MICHAEL HAYMAN, THE COURIER-JOURNAL

With West Broadway traffic moving at a snail's pace, if at all, some people sat on top of their vehicles while others walked.

Figure 7.1: By 2001, Derby cruising was the top story in the local newspaper

The city administration received considerable heat as a result of the concert's failure and the city's financial loss. Mayor Armstrong defended the city's funding of the

concert, however, arguing that the city had felt it necessary to step in and provide some sort of Derby-related activities for urban youth who otherwise felt left out of the Derby Festival (Shafer 2001a). Responding to Armstrong's criticism of the Festival, the *Courier-Journal* took the concerts' failure as an opening to defend the KDF from charges of neglecting West Louisville, arguing

> "He (the mayor) was off the mark, however, in suggesting that the city's efforts wouldn't have been necessary if the Kentucky Derby Festival had been doing better by the West End. That's unfair. The Festival's role is to put on a community-wide festival, accessible to all, in the days leading up to Derby. It has been diligent and successful in doing so. The Festival is not responsible for providing alternatives to the Derby itself. It is not responsible for entertaining, or diverting, people who don't enjoy the race or engage in the normal ways of celebrating it. And it is certainly not responsible for arranging neighborhood entertainments throughout the Derby weekend." (The Courier-Journal 2001).

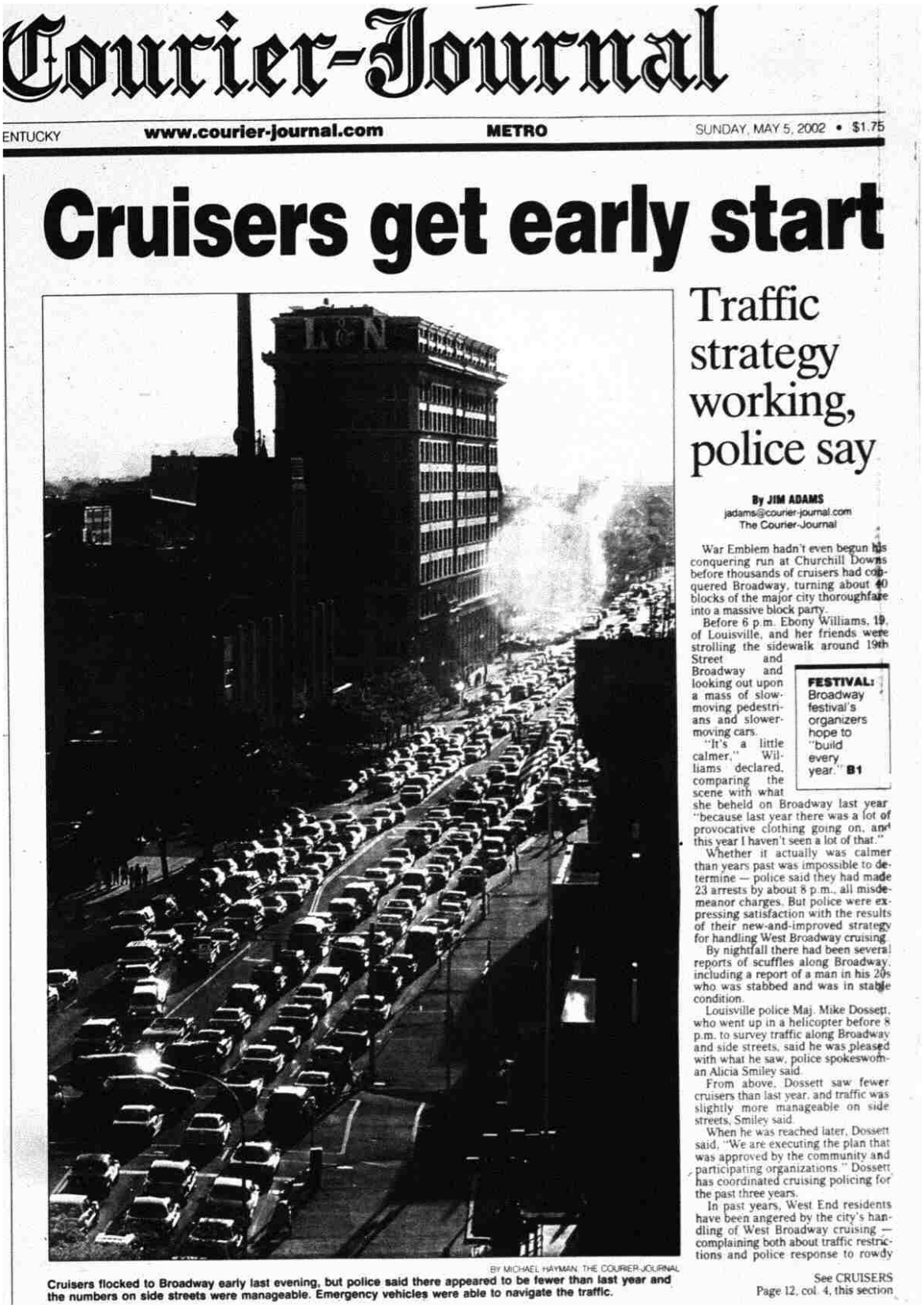
That the *Courier-Journal* went out of its way to defend the image of the Kentucky Derby Festival should come as no surprise, but this argument is problematic in a number of ways. It argues that the Festival is not responsible for providing alternatives to the "normal" way of celebrating Derby. The KDF, itself, inherently defines what is normal for the festival by including or excluding events, and for the KDF, "normal" most often refers to white and/or middle and upper class. In addition, the inclusion of festival events are by no means static; each year some new events are added and some less popular ones are removed. If the Festival was committed to putting on "community-wide, accessible" events, than it could make a better effort to provide more inclusive activities.

After the largely successful Derby weekend of 2001, the city came to a reluctant agreement with West Louisville leaders over monitoring and sponsorship of the cruising events. Both West Louisville residents and the city administration had been relatively pleased with the police handling of cruising from the previous year, and so plans were

made to treat cruising the same for the following years. One notable change was the vendor's fair, which was expanded into two separate spots on West Broadway closed to automobile traffic, one between 12th and 17th streets, and the other between 27th and 31st streets (Carter 2002). The two separate closures of West Broadway was intended to both discourage traffic gridlock on West Broadway and enable police officers to curb illicit behavior. At this point, the city also approached several West Louisville business leaders to take control of organizing the vendor's fair. In this way, much as West Louisville youth had more or less taken ownership of the car cruising on Broadway, West Louisville community and business leaders were now able to take ownership of the vendor's fair. This, in effect, resulted in even more community buy-in to the Derby weekend events. The cruising scene on West Broadway remained dominated by the youthful and transgressive elements of Derby celebration that appealed to teenagers and young adults, and had made cruising so popular to begin with. But with the expanded vendor's fair now being organized by West Louisville leaders, themselves, more family-focused activities became more largely associated with Derby cruising, at least within the closed-off sections of West Broadway.

In 2002, the closed section of West Broadway between 12th and 17th streets featured a car show, allowing cruisers a more formalized space to show off elaborately designed cars. Also included was a Gospel Fest during the late afternoon hours intending to appeal to a wider segment of the West Louisville community besides the usual youthful crowd. As 10th Ward Aldermen George Unseld described, "The main thing we're trying to do is change the atmosphere of the festival, and we've kind of put more emphasis on fun and family coming together and just enjoying themselves" (as quoted in Carter 2002). By

this point, the vendor's fair had established itself as an integral component of Derby weekend for West Louisvillians, as it provided a designated spot for vendors to set up booths and sell all kinds of items, including food, clothing, art, and music. A team of experienced African vendors from New York and New Jersey was invited in to set up booths, and they were joined by both local vendors and others from nearby cities. The vendor's fair was also part of an attempt by city administration and West Louisville leaders to add some control, legitimacy, and "respectability" to Derby cruising, as opposed to one dominated by the youth hip-hop culture and its perceived excesses. Business owners along West Broadway were again largely pleased with the hands-off police approach to monitoring cruising, as business was reportedly booming for those who could cater to the crowd. Still, traffic along the open section of



Courier-Journal

ENTUCKY www.courier-journal.com METRO SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2002 • $1.75

Cruisers get early start

Traffic strategy working, police say

By JIM ADAMS
jadams@courier-journal.com
The Courier-Journal

War Emblem hadn't even begun his conquering run at Churchill Downs before thousands of cruisers had conquered Broadway, turning about 40 blocks of the major city thoroughfare into a massive block party.

Before 6 p.m. Ebony Williams, 19, of Louisville, and her friends were strolling the sidewalk around 19th Street and Broadway and looking out upon a mass of slow-moving pedestrians and slower-moving cars.

FESTIVAL: Broadway festival's organizers hope to "build every year." **B1**

"It's a little calmer," Williams declared, comparing the scene with what she beheld on Broadway last year "because last year there was a lot of provocative clothing going on, and this year I haven't seen a lot of that."

Whether it actually was calmer than years past was impossible to determine — police said they had made 23 arrests by about 8 p.m., all misdemeanor charges. But police were expressing satisfaction with the results of their new-and-improved strategy for handling West Broadway cruising.

By nightfall there had been several reports of scuffles along Broadway, including a report of a man in his 20s who was stabbed and was in stable condition.

Louisville police Maj. Mike Dossett, who went up in a helicopter before 8 p.m. to survey traffic along Broadway and side streets, said he was pleased with what he saw, police spokeswoman Alicia Smiley said.

From above, Dossett saw fewer cruisers than last year, and traffic was slightly more manageable on side streets, Smiley said.

When he was reached later, Dossett said, "We are executing the plan that was approved by the community and participating organizations." Dossett has coordinated cruising policing for the past three years.

In past years, West End residents have been angered by the city's handling of West Broadway cruising — complaining both about traffic restrictions and police response to rowdy

See CRUISERS
Page 12, col. 4, this section

BY MICHAEL HAYMAN, THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Cruisers flocked to Broadway early last evening, but police said there appeared to be fewer than last year and the numbers on side streets were manageable. Emergency vehicles were able to navigate the traffic.

Figure 7.2: The cruising scene in 2002 again received significant coverage in local media.

West Broadway between 17th and 27th streets was at a standstill and pedestrians were described as shoulder to shoulder on the sidewalks (Adams 2002).

For Derby weekend in 2003, city officials again decided to promote the West Broadway vendor's fair in an effort to curtail cruising. Plans for this year called for one closed section of West Broadway between 22nd and 34th streets. A newly formed private partnership, Broadway Corridor LLC, led by several West Louisville businessmen, was designated to coordinate the events. Their slogan for Derby weekend was, "If you're just cruising, you're losing. Park it and walk it" (Shafer 2003). The committee also devised a list of Derby weekend "no-nos" for West Broadway: "No weapons, no drugs, no nudity, no lewd acts, no alcoholic beverages, no vending without permits, no vending in unauthorized areas, no leaving cars unattended while in traffic, no vicious animals and no excessive celebration or activity that could endanger others" (Shafer 2003). In addition to the vendor's fair, city officials announced a plan to close Shawnee and Chickasaw parks from 4pm to 4am Friday and Saturday, and from noon to 8pm on Sunday. These closures were intended to eliminate cruising in the parks. Few problems were reported for Derby weekend 2003 (Adams 2003). Hundreds of thousands visited West Broadway for the cruising and vendor's fair (Dunlop 2003). The closed section of Broadway featured more family-oriented events, such as a gospel concert on Sunday afternoon, while the more "edgy" or "racy" elements of Derby cruising were among the youth and young adults cruising along the open sections of Broadway, which were again crowded bumper to bumper with thousands of cars and pedestrians.

In 2004, the city decided to add a new wrinkle in an effort to try and curb cruising on West Broadway. *Cruize Magazine*, a car-oriented magazine geared toward primarily

African American audiences, hosted a car show at the 600,000 square foot vacant lot near 18th and Broadway -formerly the Phillip Morris building and grounds (Ritchie 2004). The "Derby City Cruize" was to showcase cars from around the country, awarding $50,000 in prizes for such honors as "Best Paint," "Best Audio/Video," "Best Air and Hydraulics," "Best Engine," "Best Undercarriage," "Best Interior," and of course, "Best in Show" (Smith 2004). To further attract visitors, the event was also to include food, live music, vendors, and a "Kid Zone." The Derby City Cruize was not intended to replace the usual vendor's fair, which was again held on the closed section of West Broadway between 22nd and 34th streets.

Derby weekend in 2004 was hampered somewhat by bad weather, as rain kept some people away. Nonetheless, thousands again descended on West Broadway for the annual events (Riley 2004d). The biggest problem in 2004 was the complete flop of the Derby City Cruize event. Organizers had advertised over 1500 cars that would arrive for the competition, but only about 50 showed up. Even worse, no electricity was available to vendors trying to set up shop. Organizers blamed the city for failing to provide electricity. City officials, however, argued they had leased the property at no cost, and it was up to the organizers to secure utilities (Smith 2004). Months later, the prize winners at the event would sue the Cruize organizers for failing to deliver the monetary awards (Riley 2004b).

The years 2001 to 2004 represented the peak years of Derby cruising. During this time, the events expanded beyond just kids and young adults cruising in their cars up and down West Broadway. With the addition of the vendor's fair, which was run by West Louisville business leaders with the approval of the city, the weekend events expanded to include a wider segment of the West Louisville community. In this way, Derby cruising

became more of a community wide celebration. The following sections of this chapter will explore the nature of Derby cruising's popularity during this time, particularly as it relates to notions of space, identity, and representation. This chapter will argue the importance of space to both the popularity of, and eventually the contestations over, Derby cruising.

Festival Ownership

For most people who participated in interviews for this dissertation, Derby weekend was not really described as being centered on the actual Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs. A few people reported watching the horse race on television each year, but many expressed little interest in the race itself. One exception was a person who, through her career had obtained higher socio-economic status, described taking her family to Churchill Downs for the first time. She was particularly happy to take her brother, whose only experience with the track had been working there as a waiter.

> "That first year we went, it really, I was kind of choked up because, you know, they were all sitting there in the box. They were just very proud to be there. None of us had ever been."

The emotion of the moment for her was reflective of both the racial and socioeconomic implications of her and her family attending the Derby. Her experience was unique, in that she had acquired the means to buy box seats for her family at the Derby. Most other people interviewed reported staying at home or in the West Louisville neighborhood for Derby weekend celebrations. Another person interviewed described Derby weekend as getting together with her family and "frying fish and cooking pinto beans!"

Derby cruising coalesced over the years from these more neighborhood-centric Derby celebrations of barbecuing and get-togethers. Though Derby cruising originated

from the younger generations, it eventually gained the acceptance and endorsement from a majority of the community. And as the vendor's fair became incorporated into the annual events, a larger segment of the community was able to participate in a positive manner. By the early 2000s, Derby cruising was one of the largest and most important celebrations for West Louisvillians. Another person interviewed described how, during its heyday, Derby cruising was at the epicenter of his social calendar:

> "I used to take off Derby week at my job… that Tuesday all the way to that Monday. Monday was like my recoup day. My brother, he lives in Richmond, it was like make sure you got this day off and he'd come down for Derby. It's only two days out of the year I won't work, and that's my birthday and I didn't want to work on Derby. But I looked on the calendar, Jan. 1 come around, I look at when that first Saturday in May came around, and I'd schedule my vacation five months before so I made sure I had it off. That's how important it used to be."

This person begins to touch on how Derby cruising's popularity began to reach to a wider, regional audience beyond just black Louisvillians. In effect, Derby cruising reached a tipping point where it had become so popular with the locals that they were proud of and excited to invite friends and family members from outside the city to join in the festivities.

In the simplest sense, Derby cruising's popularity can be traced to two fundamental components of the celebration. First, it was easy to participate. For those who wanted to cruise, they could simply get together in a car and start driving. Certainly it was not quite this simple, as there was a certain amount of social status attached to what type of car in which one was cruising. For those seriously invested in their cars, cruising became an opportunity to showcase their creativity, extravagance, and social status. This was expressed through such ways as the elaborate paint jobs, expensive rims, hydraulics, and booming speakers. But even for those who did not have the time, money, or inclination to

invest so much in their cars, any functioning car could cruise. One person interviewed described borrowing his mother's car for Derby cruising, just to have some way to participate. As cruising's popularity expanded over the years, drawing in more and more people to show off their fancy cars, he became embarrassed driving his "mother's old beat up car," and so he would just park and walk the route with friends.

This leads to the second component of Derby cruising, which was its location. Derby cruising took place on West Broadway, which lies at the heart of the largest African American community in the state of Kentucky. Given the average low income situation for West Louisvillians, the ease of accessibility was very important. For many, gaining access to individual transportation, such as a car, was not always a ready possibility. This made attending official Derby Festival events a challenge, as nearly all events were located somewhere in the city besides West Louisville. Derby cruising, however, was easy to get to. Many people could simply go out their front door and walk to the celebration. There was no admission, or any other prerequisite for joining the celebration. With cruising located directly within West Louisville, most participants were well-familiar and comfortable with where they were, and they knew how to get to and from particular places, which is important knowledge to have while cruising amongst thousands of cars and people.

Also related to Derby cruising's popularity, and a major theme that came up repeatedly in interviews with West Louisville residents, was the sense of ownership that the West Louisville community took in Derby cruising. Because of West Louisvillians' particular subjectivity, as in being both a resident of Louisville as well as being an African American resident of West Louisville, the relationship toward the Kentucky Derby Festival

was complicated. As was discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, the Kentucky Derby Festival has a long had a fractured relationship with the African American community of West Louisville. As such, over the years West Louisvillians devised more neighborhood-specific ways to celebrate Derby weekend. The following quotes from two different people interviewed help illuminate the cultural significance of this history:

> "We thought it was important for ordinary people to be able to take part in Derby in their own way in the sense that it was people who can't afford to go to Churchill Downs or can't afford to go to the track, or just not interested. That is, people, the African Americans in Louisville, because of segregation evolved a lot of private clubs, customs, festivals, that were separate from the mainstream community. So that African Americans could have their own way of enjoying Derby too. That is, even before Derby cruising evolved into what it became, before it was really shut down, there was a custom according to my parents, where African Americans would wash their cars on Derby weekend and just cruise. Now it may have been Walnut Street or it may have been Broadway or it may have been both. But that was a custom before. Now it did evolve into something else a little more than that, but it was a natural expression that grew out of the African American community."

> "There is an issue for people in the younger generations that for a lot of hip-hop people or for a lot of younger people they felt that cruising was a natural extension of what was happening on Derby weekend anyway – the barbecues, the soul music, the bikes, what eventually evolved into their generational interests, hip-hop, rims, tricked out cars, whatever. People who try to provide events at the Fairgrounds underestimate their cultural investment in cruising."

The first person describes Derby cruising as a "natural expression" that grew out of a history of celebrating Derby separately and uniquely from the larger, whiter mainstream. In this way, it represents linkages to the past, where Derby cruising is the latest manifestation of African American cultural performance of celebrating festival in a way both along with and also counter to the mainstream. The second person is more specific in detailing how the materiality of Derby cruising, such as the "hip-hop, rims, tricked out cars", are a "natural extension" of Derby celebrations of generations past, which featured

"barbecues, soul music, bikes." These historical linkages bolster the sense of ownership that West Louisville community had of Derby cruising.

In addition to the historical linkages, the nature of how and where Derby cruising originated and was performed supported the notion of ownership. Because Derby cruising existed outside of the official city wide Kentucky Derby Festival, it was viewed as something that was created from within the community. Importantly, it was not an event that was given to the the community by the city, rather it was something that became successful despite, or for some in spite of, the city's lack of involvement. For many West Louisvillians, Derby cruising became "their" Derby celebration.

This conception of the African American celebration of Derby cruising is reflected and better understood when considering the writings of Bakhtin. Bakhtin wrote of festival as being a dialogical process of incorporating and speaking to the past, present and future. These themes are apparent from the descriptions offered by interviewees as they try to connect the lineage of Derby cruising to Derby celebrations of previous generations. Bakhtin also wrote of festival as being a paradoxical process of subverting and reaffirming the dominant social order. Derby cruising illuminates Bakhtin's conception here in that it existed apart from, yet a part of, the official Kentucky Derby Festival. Cruising was subversive in that it originated from within the marginalized black West Louisville community, and really had very little to do with the actual horse race at Churchill Downs. Nevertheless, Derby cruising would not have existed without the framework of the wider Derby Festival in place. In this sense, it reaffirmed the importance of the Kentucky Derby simply by latching on to this framework. Derby week had long fostered a festive

atmosphere throughout the city, even if some of the areas of the city were more able to celebrate than others. And as one person interviewed described Derby cruising,

> "It was all along people wanting to have a good time. Wanting to make money off it. And wanting to celebrate it. Celebrate culture. Celebrate heritage. Celebrate the Derby. You know, Derby is a good excuse to have a party."

For Bakhtin, the ambivalent process of subverting and reaffirming can also be understood as being performed through "festive laughter", or the mocking or subversion of the dominant societal norms, and "grotesque realism", where this subversion is represented through the vices and excesses of individuals. These varying means of transgression became important components of Derby cruising, wherein transgression became the basis upon which cruising's authenticity was seen to ride to younger generations. Transgression also became a point of contention, though, as different segments of the West Louisville community sought to influence and control both the performance of Derby cruising and the representational aspects of how Derby cruising reflected back on the community. The following sections will explore these themes of transgression and representation to evaluate how they were implicated in performances of Derby cruising.

Transgression

Bakhtin's notion of festival practices ambivalently resisting and reifying the dominant social order are demonstrated through the hip-hop culture within which Derby cruising originated. To explore this, a few words are necessary on how hip-hop as a cultural movement is theorized in cultural studies. Hip-hop has its roots primarily in the generations of black urban youth born after the Civil Rights movement, and it originated from "a sense of alienation and social disillusionment" which manifested into a "culture of

opposition to the dominant social, political, economic, and linguistic hierarchies which are based on predominantly white values." (Rizza 2012, 375). As a cultural expression, hip-hop is often most closely associated with rap music, though the hip-hop worldview is also expressed through graffiti, clothing, dance, and other cultural performance. As a cultural movement, hip-hop is described as having usurped the influential voice of the elder generations of civil rights era veterans who preached conformity and assimilation to the mainstream in favor of a new oppositional worldview. Dyson (2005) describes this tension within the black community as existing between the "afristocracy", or the black middle and educated class that condemns the transgressive and anti-assimilative efforts of black youth, and the "ghettocracy", or the unemployed or otherwise marginalized at the edge of the economy. These discussions have spilled out into wider forums such as when Bill Cosby publicly criticized African American youth for transgressive behavior (Dyson 2005) and when civil rights veteran Rosa Parks sued the rap group Outkast for using her name as the title of one of their hit songs (Boyd 2002). Along these lines, Boyd writes "hip-hop could care less what White people have to say. As a matter of fact, hip-hop, more accurately wants to provoke White people and "bourgie ass niggas" to say something, while laughing all the way to the bank. This ultimate disregard for the approval of the mainstream is quite liberating, indeed" (11). Boyd, here, also touches on the paradoxical element of hip-hop culture, in that it simultaneously rejects and embraces the capitalistic ethos of the white mainstream (Powell 2011).

This paradoxical tension of rejection and reification of the mainstream is resolved through notions of cultural identity that are central to hip-hop and revolve around politics of location and notions of cultural authenticity, or "the real" (Boyd 2002). Murray Forman

(Forman 2002b, 2002a) has written extensively on how space and place are central to the construction of African American urban hip-hop identities, and describes how cultural archetypes, such as “the ghetto”, “inner city”, “the hood”, and other similar spatial configurations emerge as central to expressions of cultural authenticity. Forman argues that racialized urban spaces of dilapidated public housing and other similar scenes of economic depression are reproduced as “central elements of race, class, and cultural identification and recast and revised within a coherent if not entirely consistent spatial discourse, one that relies on the spatial construct of ‘the hood’” (Forman 2002b, xix). Such cultural archetypes are invoked through the “hyper-local”, with examples including “the specific referencing of street names, neighborhoods, zip codes, area codes, etc.,” where such specific referents demonstrate cultural and spatial authenticity to both a hip-hop audience and the world at large. The real, then, exists as an “ill-defined” expression of the compounded effects of “racial essentialism, spatial location, and a basic adherence to the principles and practices of the hip-hop culture” (xix).

By the late 1990s, the time at which the popularity of Derby cruising in Louisville exploded, hip-hop culture was a dominant force among American urban youth. Many people interviewed for this dissertation felt that Derby cruising can be understood as a product of hip-hop culture in West Louisville, and this likely is reflective of the notions of transgression, spatiality, and cultural authenticity. Derby cruising did not have any kind of organizational structure, and the festivities had evolved spontaneously over the years with no one person or group in control of planning the event. Despite the enormous popularity of the event, the Kentucky Derby Festival never sought to formalize the party as an officially recognized event. For that matter, cruising participants had no particular reason

to want to be part of the officially sanctioned Derby Festival. Because cruising existed outside the structure of the city bureaucracy, it maintained a sort of 'edginess' that many, especially youths, found appealing.

For many African Americans, especially in the younger generations, cruising was considered to be 'their' Derby festival event. One local author, Phillip Bailey (2006), wrote,

> "Anyone who can ignore the logistical and safety problems caused by this makeshift tradition is being intellectually dishonest. And that has become a big part of cruising's appeal — its rebelliousness, its recklessness, its giant "fuck you" to the city at large, which is mostly white. Whether we choose to understand or not (and most committed cruisers could care less if we do), cruising is seen as a birthright, an annual chance to pose in front of the hip-hop world, regardless of how much it violates the domestic tranquility of West Louisville."

Bailey here touches on the oppositional or transgressive appeal of Derby cruising. Bailey also mentions the importance of hip-hop to the spatial practices of Derby cruisers. In Louisville, Derby cruising was the one time of year that the city, and the West End neighborhood, was the focal point of the hip-hop world. The event was widely publicized through the hip-hop Internet community, and the festivities regularly attracted aspiring artists who arrived to demonstrate and publicize their talents, be it in the form of music, dance, car design/modifications and other cultural expressions. The spatial component of Derby cruising was significant to the production of hip-hop identities because of its location on West Broadway in West Louisville, an area commonly referred to in the city as 'the hood' or 'the ghetto.' In this way, Derby cruising's popularity can be traced to its evolution as a street party held in 'the hood' of Louisville. If the festival were to become controlled and planned by the city, or if the festival were to be held somewhere else, it would become less 'real,' or less authentic, and therefore less relevant to the hip-hop community.

These themes of neighborhood and authenticity were apparent in some of the interviews conducted for this project. One former cruiser described,

> "We used to look forward to Derby Cruising; you'd get your car ready for Derby; you'd try to have rims, have your music right, paint job done. I mean everybody was like when you gonna bring your car out? It'd be out for Derby. Back then it was just getting rims put on it. Get a paint job. '98 Oldsmobile. The basics back then. It wasn't like it is now. You put a couple of 12s (tire rims) in there, a nice amp, a couple of 6x9s (speakers); that's all you needed back then. Try to get you some Daytons (designer rims). If you can't get Daytons, I think I had a couple of Three Stars when they first came out. Different kind of rims. You try to have it all ready for Derby."

This resident focuses on the materiality of cruising. Another resident elaborates on how such cultural expressions fit into a wider hip-hop worldview.

> "I think cruising was the direct outcome of the hip-hop culture basically… That goes back to how the hip-hop culture has a very close street relationship, and being on the block, representing yourself from the block. Representing myself meaning the appearance of my car… Hip-hop culture is a very much a showcase type of culture. Cruising gives people an opportunity to showcase themselves, their talent, their car, whatever they would like to showcase, their wild side… To be out on the street is to be out in the open and to show your authenticity. To say I'm from the streets is to say I'm authentically from the neighborhood and represent the values and norms of this particular neighborhood or where I live… If I'm real in the hood, I have to be out on cruising. Cause if not, I'm lame. Everyone is out for cruising, so you know I got to do something. If I don't have a car, even if that means I'm walking on the block, I have to be out there, I have to represent. You have people coming from Tennessee, so I have to come out on cruising to represent and show people from Tennessee how Louisville does it. So cruising became a showcase to other cities, to people from other cities who were coming in."

This description encapsulates the elements of space and authenticity and demonstrates their importance for Derby cruisers in representing a hip-hop identity. This resident uses the spatial metaphors of "the block", "the streets", and "the hood" to describe the authenticity of Derby cruising. Within these 'real' spaces, the resident describes how it was necessary to "showcase" one's self, one's talents, or even one's "wild side." In this way, not only is one transgressing the dominant societal norms in an act of opposition to

the status quo, but one is also demonstrating how 'real' Derby cruising and West Louisville are to others from out of town who have come to participate.

The issue of one's "wild side" is a topic that came up in nearly every interview for this dissertation. This wild side, or transgressive behavior, was most often described in terms of either public drug/alcohol usage or public displays of sexuality. Depending on the individual resident's perspective, the wild side of Derby cruising was referred to with either fondness, condemnation, or a resigned 'kids will be kids' attitude. Those with fond memories of Derby cruising transgression were most often younger adults who had participated in Derby cruising. Along these lines, one resident described the wild side of Derby cruising:

> "Anything that you wanted to go on, went on. The girls, I mean they called it Baby Freaknik, lil Freaknik, I mean, actually it's exactly what happened. I mean girls would do anything. They'd have little or nothing on. To be seen. If you had the baddest cars, or whatever, you was gonna have three or four girls in there, naked, camcorders everywhere. I mean but anything you wanted went on that night, went on that weekend. I mean (pauses and reminisces), yeah… yeah… (laughs). Those was some good days, man, some good days…"

This resident recalls fondly transgressive behavior associated with Derby cruising as "some good days." This resident also mentions Freaknik, an Atlanta-based festival of the mid-1990s. Derby cruising's rapid rise in popularity has sometimes been attributed to the shutting down of Freaknik. Freaknik had begun in 1983 as a gathering of students from historically black colleges on Spring Break. Over time, it had grown in popularity, and by the early 1990s Freaknik included estimates of over 200,000 African Americans - primarily youth and young adults - converging on the city to party, originally in several city parks, but as traffic congestion grew, in the streets as well (Meyers 2004). Residents complained about the traffic, as well as reports of lewd behavior, violence, and drug and alcohol abuse.

By 1996, Atlanta city officials were concerned enough with the events to ramp up police monitoring and patrolling, with the ultimate intention being to discourage people from attending. By 1999, the city had "zero tolerance" for any Freaknik-related activities, and the annual event was effectively ended (Suggs 2008). The resident quoted above refers to cruising as an offshoot of Freaknik as a way of situating the significance of Derby cruising within a regional, or even national, picture of hip-hop related events.

For some people interviewed, the issue of public displays of sexuality was more of a sensitive issue, and not one to be recalled with fond memories. One woman explained:

> "Cruising I think breeds sometimes exploitive behavior of young women. And a lot of those women allow themselves to be exploited… I can't tell you some of the comments that were made to me. And I mean, come on, I'm not hot you know, but I mean these guys were driving by and they were saying stuff, and I was thinking, if my sons were with me they wouldn't be saying those things. I think it's an opportunity for a lot of guys to come and just, I don't know, try to find a woman or somebody to be with. A lot of bad behavior."

This resident describes the transgressive nature of Derby cruising as "exploitive" and "bad behavior". Undoubtedly her perspective as an older woman and the mother of three boys influences how she perceives the transgressive behavior.

These anecdotes of transgressive displays of sexuality resonate with those found in other similar studies examining car cruising scenes in the U.S. The automobile, itself, has long been noted for its association with masculinity (O'Connell 1998), and the art of car modification, or "souping up" cars, is in particular associated not only with masculinity (Bengry-Howell and Griffin 2007) but with black culture as well (Gilroy 2001). Examining the 1950s car cruising scene in Southern California, Witzel and Bash (1997) noted how "Without a doubt, a cool car was a prerequisite to get girls and get laid. If the car was a racy, sexy hot rod one had a good shot. So car owners became aware of the

numero uno reason for cruising: driving an awesome automobile was the most effective way to attract females and keep their interest" (11). The scene described here by Witzel and Bash places importance on the role of a modified car, or "sexy hot rod", in asserting a masculinist identity and gaining the attention females in the crowd.

In a more contemporary study of car cruising, Best (2005)analyzed the lowriding scene in San Jose, CA. In discussing the performances of gendered identities in these spaces, she described how "young women exist under a spotlight of peering eyes, cast as objects whose bodies are inspected much as the body of a car would be. American car cultures' very organization depends on young women's presence as sexual objects in that they affirm a heterosexual world of masculine competition and bravado; their existence helps to define their opposite, the subjects of this world, young men *as* men" (58). Best noted that, though the cruising scene is dominated by masculinist practices, females also play an active role as "creators of the gendered realities that often bind and limit them" (71).

As some of the more lurid descriptions of Derby cruising describe, transgression was often a gendered affair. Over time, local media coverage of Derby cruising came to focus more and more on these forms of transgression. An article in the *Courier-Journal* describing Derby cruising reads,

> "Later, after darkness fell, a man walking the route jumped into the road and dropped his pants in front of a car of giggling girls. He thrust his body back and forth as the girls giggled some more… A young woman hung out the window and bared her breasts to several young men carrying video recorders. Asked if that was the craziest thing he had seen last night, (a man) shook his head and smiled. The craziest thing he'd seen "you can't put in the paper," he said." (Riley 2004d).

As will be explored later in this dissertation, it was this type of behavior, as much as anything, that bothered opponents of Derby cruising.

Politics and Difference

This chapter has so far explored how identity and representation were implicated in understandings and performances of Derby cruising festivities. Additionally, this chapter has explored how space was critical to the successful negotiation of such identities and representations. For many in the younger generations, Derby cruising offered an opportunity to assert hip-hop identities because of the nature of the event. Derby cruising took place in the streets of West Louisville, a place that lent credence to notions of authenticity or realness in relation to 'the hood'. Derby cruising was spontaneous, unorganized, and 'owned' by the cruisers themselves, as opposed to having been 'given' to the West Louisville community by the Kentucky Derby Festival. For West Louisvillians not interested in flaunting a hip-hop image, Derby cruising had evolved to include an even wider segment of the West Louisville community. The vendor's fair, while organized and controlled by West Louisville business and community leaders, had received tacit approval from the city government, and was therefore understood to be a more 'legitimate' space for celebrating Derby. Within the vendor's fair space, community leaders organized more family friendly events, such as a Kids Zone, gospel music performances, and professional vendors selling wares from around the country.

Ultimately, the tension over what Derby cruising was and how it represented West Louisville became a source of contestation from within the African American community. As has been noted by scholars previously, internal contestations over control of festival representations is not entirely uncommon. Susan Smith (1999) argues that such a politics of difference, defined as how politics are concealed within non-political, social, cultural and economic forms, become most apparent through festival celebrations that

commemorate particular people, places, or events. Similar politics of difference have been explored through contestations over Irish identities performed through New York City's St. Patrick Day's Parade (Marston 2002) and Latino/Latina identities performed in Toronto through the Canadian Hispanic Day Parade (Veronis 2006). Public spaces, such as the streets where parading and other festival practices take place, are notable not only because they serve as "an active medium through which new identities are created or contested" but also because "new social identities and new meanings of public space are seen to be constructed together" (Ruddick 1996, 135). Mitchell (1995) similarly argues for the importance of public spaces as "spaces for representation" (115), or spaces through which political organizations or social factions can engage in political participation in order to contest dominant notions of what is the accepted 'public' and 'public behavior'.

As the local media began covering Derby cruising more closely in the early 2000s, there entered into the public discourse, in the form of newspaper editorials and letters to the editor, some discussion of concerns regarding cruising. As the growth in popularity of Derby cruising increased each year, so too did the vocal opposition from residents within the city. In the West End, some residents complained about the enormous traffic problems caused by the influx of thousands of vehicles. The neighborhood of West Louisville included approximately 80,000 residents; Derby cruising brought in well over 100,000 people - with some estimates approaching several hundred thousand - for the festivities, which led to traffic gridlock, not only on West Broadway, which is the major thoroughfare in the area, but on most of the side streets, as well. Many local residents, especially those who did not participate in cruising, felt that such traffic was a nuisance at best and a considerable safety hazard at worst. Others complained about the 'street party' atmosphere

along West Broadway that resulted in the proliferation of alcohol, drugs, and obscene behavior.

The opposing attitudes of African Americans toward Derby cruising in Louisville were reflected in editorials from various newspapers around the city. Some residents, especially older residents living near West Broadway, opposed the traffic, noise and disturbance of cruising festivities. Some African American residents also opposed the lawless nature of the crowd. Felicia Nu'Man (2006) wrote in the *Velocity Weekly*, a subset of the daily newspaper:

> "Gimme a break, people. Derby cruising is a menace and it is dangerous. And as quiet as it's kept most of the residents on Broadway and neighboring streets, black folks want it to stop. They are not vocal because many don't want to seem disloyal to the 'black community' or be perceived to be siding with 'the Man.' But guess what: I could give a damn about what this elusive, phantom 'black community' thinks. I'm on the side of right and obeying the law."

Nu'Man's comments here demonstrate the complexity of attitudes toward Derby cruising among African Americans. And, given Nu'Man's occupation as a lawyer, her comments may also be reflective of how social class influences attitudes toward cruising within the African American population. The importance of space is also reflected in Nu'Man's comments, as she constructs cruising as "a menace" and "dangerous" to the residents "on Broadway and neighboring streets." Because of cruising's location in the streets, it is perceived as uncontrollable and having the potential to violently spill out into the surrounding community.

An interesting point of contention that came up in several of the interviews for this dissertation was over the notion of culture. In describing my research to the interviewees, I would often refer to Derby cruising as a "cultural" festival. A couple of interviewees took issue with describing the festival as cultural, and I believe this is reflective of the

contestations over how Derby cruising represented the West Louisville community. One interviewee stated:

> "When I think of culture, I think of treasured values and things of that nature. Something that would bring the community together or a group of people together. And I know we have lots of cultural festivals. That (Derby cruising) to me was not a cultural festival, in no way shape, form or fashion. It was a festival, but I wouldn't put culture anywhere near it. A lot of African Americans attended it, but I still wouldn't put culture anywhere near it… at least not in a positive way. That was just a bunch of knuckleheads."

For this resident, she is eager to disassociate the idea of culture from Derby cruising, arguing that things that are cultural should be about "treasured values" or should "bring the community together". This resident believes that, although Derby cruising was a festival in that it brought people together, it did not do so in a "positive way." For this resident, then, the issue of culture is very much political, in that controls need to be placed on what is defined as cultural so as to include items that are "positive". Undoubtedly, different segments of the community felt differently about whether or not Derby cruising was a positive event.

Another resident also weighed in on the issue of Derby cruising as a "cultural" festival:

> "Well how do you mean cultural? I don't think its a cultural event at all. I don't know, I'm a little uncomfortable with that. Because cruising is nothing new, and it's not a black thing, it's not a white thing, really to me it's a youth thing. In that respect, it could be a cultural thing. It could be a youth cultural thing. To us, I think when you say something is cultural, we automatically associate it with ethnicity."

This resident speaks more directly to the perceived relationship between culture and ethnicity. She argues that, for many African Americans, the idea of culture is generally associated with ethnicity, and she is hesitant to describe Derby cruising as cultural because of the ethnic connotations. She is more comfortable with the idea of Derby cruising being

a “youth cultural” event, because cruising itself is neither an exclusively black nor white phenomenon. Underlying the comments of both these people is a general disapproval of Derby cruising activities and, especially, the transgressive behaviors that went along. Further, the disapproval of describing Derby cruising as a “cultural” festival stems from the reservation that such transgressive behaviors would be interpreted as representative of African American culture in West Louisville. These people have different understandings of what West Louisville events should be included as cultural events.

It is clear there are internal contestations over Derby cruising regarding what and how the festival represented the West Louisville African American community. While these internal contestatations need to be highlighted, they should not be understood as a significant rift within the community. Most identified the difference in attitudes toward Derby cruising as being emblematic of a generational divide between older and younger West Louisvillians. One resident described:

> “Generally, a lot of African Americans support cruising… It was actually an intra-racial debate between African Americans; sort of the old, more church oriented African Americans saw the more audacious, hip-hop oriented cruising, as vulgar and violent, as misrepresenting what African Americans are about, sort of the thing that Bill Cosby made in his speech.”

But even, as this resident describes, there was generational, or perhaps even religious, divide regarding Derby cruising, this never became a public point of contention within the community. In other words, there were no formal protests or organizational efforts from within the community that opposed Derby cruising. Another resident drove home this point:

> “I never heard them (church leaders) speak out against cruising. At least not officially. And there is a organization that could have been the spokesperson, could have lent its voice. It’s called the Interdenominational Ministerial Coalition (IMC). But I didn’t hear the IMC say anything publicly about cruising.”

This resident's point is that, even if older community and religious leaders generally disapproved cruising, they did not do so in any sort of formal or organized manner. Based on how Derby weekend events transpired between 2001 and 2004, it appears evident that the West Louisville leadership decided to, rather than condemn Derby cruising because of the youthful transgressive behavior common on West Broadway, instead try to transform Derby cruising from the inside out. Community leaders understood the significance of having such a large festival and worked hard to establish the vendor's fair and other more family-oriented Derby weekend events on West Broadway. Even though there were internal reservations about how Derby cruising was presented as representative of West Louisville, community leaders hoped to leverage the significance of the event to create better and more positive opportunities for people to participate. The formation of the Derby City Ambassadors, and the willingness of so many community members to volunteer for this task, speaks to this. One of the organizers of the vendor's fair also spoke to this:

> "It (the vendor's fair) required a whole lot of volunteers to be a part of it… A lot of pride, a lot of respect. A lot of people participated in what went on, and it was an event for the West End."

The last sentence here is perhaps the most important. This resident describes Derby cruising and the associated vendor's fair as "an event for the West End," highlighting the need for and importance of some sort of community wide Derby celebration for African Americans in West Louisville. The early years of the 2000s provided one form of a community wide celebration, one that appealed to a wide segment of the West Louisville community. Ultimately, this form of Derby celebration was one that became untenable for the city and would not last.

Summary and Conclusions

> "Black urban youth can hardly help viewing their bodies as targets – of cultural opposition and creative opportunity" (Dyson 2005, 104).

This chapter has explored some of the different identities and representations associated with Derby cruising. For African American youth of West Louisville, Derby cruising was an ideal stage for performing hip-hop identities that transgressed the white mainstream. The spatiality of cruising was important here in that it took place in the streets of West Louisville, lending an air of cultural authenticity. Further, the events were not controlled or administered by city authorities, nor was the event 'given' to the West End by the city. In this way, Derby cruising was a 'real' hip-hop event that had evolved spontaneously by youth from within the neighborhood.

This understanding of cruising is complimented by the Bakhtinian notion of the 'carnivalesque.' Bakhtin argued for the importance of festival for marginalized populations as a fleeting opportunity to transgress and resist the societal controls and norms put in place by the dominant class. The carnivalesque encapsulates the mannerisms used for such transgressive purposes, including the flaunting of official 'seriousness' through lewd and oppositional behaviors. Nearly everyone involved with Derby cruising was aware of the types of lewd behaviors that went on during Derby cruising - particularly after dark, though many believed these types of behavior were exaggerated in the media. For most, Derby cruising was just about having a good time, and if this meant doing so in a way that ran counter to the imagery of the official Kentucky Derby Festival, then so be it.

Other understandings of Derby cruising were less about transgression and more about community building. With the establishment of the vendor's fair by West Louisville business leaders in 2001, a more family-centered or 'respectable' element was incorporated

into the Derby cruising scene. This element made the events more appealing to a wider segment of the West Louisville community, where those not interested in transgression or hip-hop identities still had a place to convene and celebrate Derby weekend. The success of the vendor's fair not only promoted community-building in West Louisville, but also resulted in significant positive economic outcomes for those who were able to participate. For one of the few times in the history of the Kentucky Derby Festival, the economic gains from Derby-related tourism were directly had in West Louisville.

These differing understandings of what Derby cruising should be were felt within the African American community of West Louisville. These types of internal contestations are not unique to Louisville or Derby cruising, as scholars have noted the "internal struggle within the black community as to who gets to author the black narrative: the ghettocentric hip-hop generation or the black bourgeois descendants of the Harlem renaissance 'talented-tenth' and the middle-class beneficiaries of the post-Civil Rights era." (Powell 461) As Dyson (2005) has noted, there were those who generally frowned upon the transgressive behaviors associated with Derby cruising, believing that the "jubilant performance would be seen as too aggressive" and that "poor and struggling blacks confirmed every stereotype of uncouth behavior." (111) Nonetheless, this debate was, for the most part, held within the black community of West Louisville. Even among those who were opposed to Derby cruising, the potential for changing from within was more appealing than imposed restrictions by the city.

CHAPTER 8: ENDING DERBY CRUISING

This chapter analyzes how contestations over and through the spaces of West Louisville led up to the eventual ending of the festivities. Geographers have noted how urban space can become the medium through which meanings pertaining to "whose city" are negotiated (e.g. Mitchell et al, 2014). To this end, claiming a right to the streets opens up the possibility for political dissent and challenges to the status quo. In taking over the streets of West Louisville on Derby weekend, African Americans were able to assert a unique identity and sense of belonging to the city. However, these assertions became increasingly understood to be problematic by the city's political leadership. This chapter identifies the spaces through which the power to marginalize and/or eliminate Derby cruisers' right to the streets was expressed. These include, the spaces of the newspaper editorial board, from where increasingly dismissive opinion pieces were disseminated; the spaces of the city political administration, where the ultimate decision to end cruising was made; the spaces of the police administration, where plans for enforcing the ending of cruising were made; and the spaces of the courtroom, where legal challenges to the city's decision were dismissed.

The golden years of Derby cruising were short-lived from the years 2001-2004, and fissures in the relative truce between West Louisville and city leaders began to emerge following an outbreak of violence attributed to the Derby cruising scene in 2005. With one fatal shooting on West Broadway, and several others around the city on Derby week linked to - perhaps unfairly - the cruising scene, city leaders were able to successfully turn the tide of public sentiment against cruising, and the event was officially canceled beginning in 2006. To enforce the cancellation of cruising, police erected barricades along West

Broadway and distributed 'passes' for residents to gain access to the roadway. While such efforts to end cruising were ultimately successful, they also raised concerns from West Louisville residents about the massive police presence and restrictions. While sentiments toward cruising itself were mixed, nearly everyone was displeased with how the city enforced its ending. In the years after Derby cruising's demise, little has been done to replace the celebration for West Louisvillians, and as one interviewee described, the neighborhood is a "dead scene" on Derby weekend.

This chapter also argues the importance of the role the 'streets' in both the symbolic significance of Derby cruising and the oppositional stance taken by cruising opponents. In the U.S., the streets have been used traditionally to assert a group's 'right' to the city and/or lay claim materially and symbolically to a specific place or neighborhood within the city. For African Americans in the West End of Louisville, Derby cruising also offered an opportunity for participants to engage communally and promote cultural creativity. In this way, the streets became a space of representation directed not only toward the African American community but to the city's white majority as well.

The location of the festivities in the 'streets' also played a significant role in framing the opposition to cruising, as critics depicted the events as 'uncontrollable' and 'lawless'. Undoubtedly there existed some substantial problems with cruising, in terms of the traffic and potential safety risks, but these problems also existed with other Derby festival events, including Thunder Over Louisville and the actual Running of the Roses. What set cruising apart was that it was more spontaneous, and therefore less-managed by the city, and this led many residents to fear for what could potentially happen. For Derby Cruising, its particular spatiality brought about its origins, growth in popularity, and eventual ending.

The Tide Turns

The cruising scene on West Broadway in 2005 was one of contrasts. The vendor's fair along the closed section of West Broadway, now condensed to a section between 22nd and 29th streets, was described as an "overwhelming success", with estimates of over 200,000 people visiting the area (Smith 2005). That year's event included over 80 vendors, live music, and carnival rides for children. Organizers were so pleased with the the fair, that they were already planning ahead for the next year, with ideas such as expanding the live music and potentially formalizing a West Louisville Derby parade (Smith 2005).

Outside of the vendor's fair area, however, the usual lewd behavior of young cruisers, which was expected and tolerated by police, so long as there was not any violence, was compounded by several shootings. On Friday night, there were two nonfatal shootings near the West Broadway cruising route. Then on Saturday, a young man from Ohio was shot and killed by a man, also from Ohio, on West Broadway (Tompkins 2005). The shooting reportedly resulted from an altercation between the two men over a fender-bender that had escalated to deadly violence. Additionally, but unrelated to the cruising scene, a woman was shot and killed in the Portland neighborhood, which is located on the northern edge of West Louisville Saturday night; and these shootings had followed two West Louisville homicides earlier in the week which were also unrelated to cruising (Halladay 2005b). Even though each of these shootings was unrelated, and only one of the fatal shootings had anything to do with Derby weekend cruising, they were all bundled together as emblematic of Derby weekend violence in West Louisville when reported by the media (e.g. The Courier-Journal 2005b; Baye 2005; The Courier-Journal 2005c).

In all, the violence cast a pall over Derby weekend, and especially Derby cruising. The uneasy truce that had existed between the police and cruisers began to crumble. City officials began to voice their concern about how Derby cruising had evolved over the last ten years. Mayor Abramson was quoted, “This is going to be the year that we make significant decisions about the future of cruising” (Halladay 2005b). Metro Police Chief White was also quoted, “I'm not sure adding more police officers is the answer. We're really covering a lot of miles in terms of policing” (Halladay 2005b). A prominent African American columnist for the *Courier-Journal,* Betty Winston Baye, penned a column blasting Derby cruising. She wrote, “My vote is to end Derby cruising. When children cannot safely enjoy their kiddy rides, when parents rightfully fear stray bullets, and when West End merchants' cash registers aren't ringing as they are everywhere else in the city on that weekend, it's time to hang it up” (Baye 2005). A *Courier-Journal* editorial came out strongly in favor of ending Derby cruising: “Louisville has made the Internet lists of places where you can supposedly come to thumb your nose, and worse, not only at convention but at basic civil behavior. Only a crackdown, of the kind that Atlanta conducted in similar circumstances, will get rid of that unwelcome distinction” (The Courier-Journal 2005b). This editorial references Atlanta’s efforts to end Freaknik in the late 1990s, an African American festival event that was often linked to Derby cruising.

But not everyone came out so strongly against Derby cruising. While most acknowledged the problems of violence in 2005, such violence had not necessarily been the norm for West Broadway on Derby weekend. The last notable violence that had occurred was in 2001, and it had not resulted in any fatalities. Several city council members representing West Louisville acknowledged changes may be in order, but not an entire

cancellation of the events. Council president, Barbara Shanklin of the 2nd District, was quoted at a council meeting, “We're here to find a way that everyone can have fun and there won't be any killings” (Halladay 2005a). Other council members, particularly those representing other parts of the city, were not so conciliatory. Kelly Downard, representing the wealthy white suburbs of the northeastern 16th district, was quoted, “It's got to stop. We put the neighbors, the residents and the police force all in danger" (Halladay 2005a).

Figure 8.1: *Courier-Journal* cartoon from May 2005 critical of Derby cruising.

The topic of Derby cruising remained a hot topic in the city long after Derby weekend had come and passed. In June, the Metro Council held a community forum with residents to hear a variety of perspectives on how residents felt about the issue. Some argued that the potential for violence was a fact of life everyday in West Louisville, and that Derby weekend was nothing special in that regard (Wilson 2005). Council members

urged West Louisville leaders to come up with a plan on what changes could be made to Derby cruising by the end of the year. The Louisville Urban League also hosted a community forum to gather input on the issue (Brown 2005). Later in June, the mayor met with a group of cruising supporters, including West Louisville residents and business owners. One supporter was quoted, "These young ones tried to express that for them to come and take Derby cruising away from them is not a real option. They have done nothing wrong. They have a right to Broadway" (Otts 2005) A subsequent editorial in the *Courier-Journal* responded harshly to Derby cruising supporters,

> "Some who now are calling for more police to maintain control are also likely, if they do, to be the first out of the gate to allege police brutality. An even bigger worry is that with thousands of people out in the streets, all it would take is one or two knuckleheads unwilling to cooperate with police to provoke a riotous situation… The question is whose desires will be honored? Will it be those who are determined to have their dangerous fun no matter the cost or inconvenience, or those who believe that the Derby weekend gridlock, vulgarity and violence have got to go?" (The Courier-Journal 2005c)

This editorial's harsh stance toward Derby cruising is problematic. It first links those who call for more police control of Derby cruising with those who outspokenly oppose police brutality without offering any evidence for this. Further, it dismissively addresses the issue of police brutality despite the well-documented problems within the city between the police force and West Louisville. Secondly, the editorial argues that Derby cruising is merely "one or two knuckleheads" away from devolving into a riotous situation, despite nothing of the sort ever having happened in previous Derby weekends. Even in 2000, when racial tensions in the city were at their highest, there were no instances of riotous behavior occurring in conjunction with Derby cruising. Nonetheless, the sentiments presented in this editorial became more widespread, or at least more loudly spoken, following Derby weekend 2005.

Outrage over Derby weekend violence sparked a citywide debate over the merits and/or problems associated with Derby cruising, and the debate lasted through the year and into the next. Cruising supporters argued that the event simply needed more planning and organization, and this could be achieved by making Derby cruising an officially sanctioned Derby Festival event. Other supporters argued that this level of violence was an anomaly, and that it should not be used as an excuse to shut down an event that retained such popularity in the West End community. Some cruising supporters also believed that the worst behavior of cruisers stemmed from the influx of out-of-towners who did not have the same level of appreciation and respect for the event and its location in the West End (Cuculiansky 2005). These supporters believed that more planning and organization would result in the event being turned back over to the local community members, many of whom felt significant pride and ownership in cruising.

As the controversy over Derby cruising continued, the *Louisville Defender* conducted a survey of readers to gauge African American public opinion on the issue. Over a three week period from May 12, 2005 to May 26, 2005, the weekly newspaper contained a questionnaire soliciting reader responses to a series of questions about Derby cruising. The questionnaire began:

> "There is currently a major debate being conducted throughout Louisville Metro concerning the fate of "Broadway Cruising" and the violence, lewd behavior, criminal activities, massive arrests and the murder(s) that took place during the Derby weekend celebration. Members of the majority community, politicians, police, religious leaders, community activists, the mayor, Metro Council members and others have weighed in on both sides of the discussion. Although some have expressed support for allowing cruising to continue with different rules and regulations imposed to curb the negative behavior and violence, others have said that cruising in West Louisville on Derby weekend must be stopped" (The Louisville Defender 2005b).

This opening passage suggests the newspaper's stance on the issue, as it quickly associates Broadway cruising with the most negative aspects of the activities without acknowledging any of the positives, such as the economic impact, the community support for the vendor's fair, and the overall popularity among African Americans for this particular Derby weekend event. Following the opening statement was a series of questions:

- Do you want to see cruising stopped in West Louisville on Derby weekend?
- If cruising is banned in West Louisville on Derby weekend, SHOULD IT BE BANNED in other parts of Metro Louisville?
- What are your suggestions for alternatives to cruising that can provide positive and entertaining ways of celebration for the West Louisville African American community during Derby weekend?
- Who do you think should make the decision to stop or change the way that cruising is conducted in West Louisville on Derby weekend?
- Should out of towners be banned from cruising?
- Should a strict dress code be enforced if cruising is allowed to continue?
- Should all laws by strictly enforced during cruising on West Broadway, including a "heavy handed" approach by police?
- Please give us your opinion on the degree of "Welcome" extended to the West Louisville African American community to participate in all of the Derby related events, including being encouraged to attend Churchill Downs.

At the bottom of the questionnaire was a return mailing address to the editorial office of *The Defender*, as well as a space where respondents were given the option to include their name and indicate whether or not they were a resident of West Louisville.

On June 30, 2005 *The Defender* released a summary of the results from the survey (The Louisville Defender 2005a). On the question as to whether or not residents wanted to see cruising stopped, 46.3% responded "No" they didn't want to see cruising stopped, while 40.2% responded "Yes". These numbers reveal a considerable divide, even within the African American community in West Louisville. *The Defender* also included a few explanatory comments - both pro and con - from respondents who wished to express why they answered the way they did. Examples included:

-Negatives

- "The massive amount of illegal behavior (during cruising) is a disgrace to the city."
- "It's not respectful our city."
- "Cruising has no economic benefit to the city and drains resources."

-Positives

- "People who can't afford to go to high priced (Derby) parties can still socialize (on Broadway). Also it's a venue for ones who want to be seen."
- "Cruising is not the problem, (bad) behavior is!"
- "It's a good time… I do think that there are safety issues."

The Defender also included comments related to how residents felt about the Kentucky Derby Festival in terms of its inclusiveness to black Louisvillians. A few comments are notable:

- "I'm am unaware of any 'welcome' extended to the west Louisville African American community to attend Churchill Downs. Besides the (Pegasus) parade, African Americans are not welcomed because (we don't) relate to most of the events nor (do) the other participants (relate to us)."
- "Unfortunately many Derby events are not for Louisville residents, unless you have money. No one is discouraged, but there is not a welcome mat for all to participate."

Despite the overall results of the survey, which indicated a higher percentage of residents favoring keeping cruising as opposed to ending it, *The Defender* argued that "the general consensus was Broadway cruising has gotten out of hand and beyond the capacity of law enforcement to guarantee public safety." This may be reflective of the *The Defender*'s position as generally opposed to cruising. Additionally, the survey results should not necessarily be considered as statistically representative of the West Louisville community, as the readership of *The Defender* likely skews to an older demographic, with the younger generation of cruisers less represented statistically in the survey results. Despite this, a majority of respondents still favored keeping cruising.

Cruising remained a hot topic for newspaper letters to the editor, local radio call-in shows, and at city council meetings. Critics cited the homicide(s) as an example of how 'out-of-control' the party had become. An editorial in The *Courier-Journal* summed up such attitudes:

> "The increasingly violent bacchanal of Derby cruising along West Broadway is hardly a Louisville tradition, and it most certainly is not one that should be honored or preserved. In less than a decade, cruising has grown into a scourge on the West End: an appalling intrusion on long-suffering residents; a seamy stage for out-of-town exhibitionists; a dangerous invitation to violence, crime and gang-banging, and a nightmare for police. The surging adolescent anarchy has defied every reasonable attempt to control it and to ensure public safety. It has turned more lawless

> and more violent by the year, edging ever nearer to a mass tragedy" (The Courier-Journal 2003).

This editorial, like others from the *Courier-Journal*, tries to create a sense of moral panic and fear of impending doom if Derby cruising is not ended. The editorial invokes a number of emotionally charged descriptors for the cruising scene, including "violent bacchanal", "scourge", "appalling intrusion", "seamy stage", "dangerous invitation", "gang-banging", "adolescent anarchy", and "mass tragedy." With these descriptors, the editorial goes to great lengths to try and appeal to the moral sensibilities of the city's citizenry in order to turn the tide of public sentiment against cruising. The editorial also plays upon the racialized fears of black youth in the streets and the "anarchy" that is capable of ensuing as a result at any moment (e.g. Pain 2001, Loader 1998, Brown 1995). Indeed, scholars have noted the frequency with which "Young black males have been discursively rendered as one of the primary threats to "law and order" in the city, a primary focal point of social anxiety in a rising "moral panic" fueled by strong talk of deviance, delinquency, and danger" (Forman 2002, 49). Ultimately, such efforts were successful at turning the tide of public sentiments against cruising, and the city was provided enough ammunition to put an end to the events.

Ending Derby Cruising

Early in 2006, Mayor Abramson, with Police Chief White at his side, announced that the city would, through the help of the police department, permanently put an end the tradition of Derby cruising. Abramson was quoted,

> "For the safety of our citizens, we must - and we will - end Derby weekend cruising. What may have started as harmless fun has evolved into something very dangerous and even deadly. Cruising is against the law and has become a venue for drug and alcohol abuse, and even violence. When

> it comes to public safety, my job is not to find a consensus solution. My job is to do what's right" (Shafer and Edelen 2006).

The presence of Police Chief White in this announcement was of particular significance. As was discussed in Chapter 5, White had in 2003 become the first African American police chief in the city. Since taking over, White had made considerable inroads to the West Louisville African American community to try and resolve some of the fear and mistrust, particularly stemming from the recent history of police violence and abuses. White's presence in opposing the continuation of Derby cruising and being in charge to enforce its ending helped dissolve some of the racial tensions that otherwise may have been more prominent regarding the decision to end cruising. In addition, the announcement was made well in advance of the upcoming Derby Festival so as to allow word of the banning to spread throughout the region and prevent travelers from arriving and expecting the usual festive atmosphere.

The legal justification for ending cruising was found through an already existing ordinance on the city books that forbade cruising-like behaviors. Though the ordinance had long been in place, its enforcement could be considered "selective". The ordinance reads:

> CRUISING LAW: It's unlawful for anyone on the highways, roadways or parking lots within metro Louisville to operate, cruise, stop, park or leave a vehicle that impedes traffic or pedestrians (except by police order or during emergencies, as defined by law). The penalty: $25 to $500 fine or up to 50 days in jail (LMCO 2005).

Needless to say, not everyone was satisfied with the decision to end cruising. Many were upset with what they felt was a heavy handed decision by the mayor. The Rev. Gerome Sutton , executive director of the African American Think Tank, was quoted, "If he (Abramson) is going to crush cruising, then he ought to have a plan in place as an alternative. Black kids and poor kids don't have no box seats at the Derby. They have very

few options" (Cengel 2006). Similarly, the Rev. Louis Coleman, director of the Justice Resource Center, stated that he would only be on board with the mayor's decision as long as the city provided some other form of activities and events geared toward West Louisvillians and African American youth (Shafer and Edelen 2006).

Heeding the calls from West Louisville leaders and hoping to make the shutting down of Derby cruising as non-eventful as possible, city leaders decided the vendor's fair could still proceed as usual, but not in its traditional spot along shut down blocks of West Broadway. Instead, the vendor's fair would be held at the old Philip Morris vacant lot near 18th and Broadway, which was the same location the failed Derby City Cruize had taken place a few years prior (Edelen 2006). Several African American leaders also stepped up to try and provide an alternative venue for African American youth to celebrate Derby weekend. Former basketball stars Allan Houston, who was originally from Louisville, and Scooter McRay, who played college basketball at the University of Louisville, as well as community activist Christopher 2X, organized a three-day Derby weekend event called Derby Fest '06 (Halladay 2006a). The event featured a Friday night "Hip-hop Summit" at the Kentucky International Convention Center, as well as a celebrity basketball game, a step show, and a community forum entitled "Is Musical Activism Dead or Alive?" (Halladay 2006c). Saturday and Sunday events would include live music and a car show along River Road at the Louisville Water Tower, a popular spot for concerts and festivals - although, it should be noted, located nowhere near West Louisville. Event organizers, who also partnered with the Muhammad Ali Center and local businesses, were quick to point out they were not trying to replace cruising. McCray was quoted, "Our event was

never meant to be a substitute for cruising, but to create a positive change and let people know they have a positive alternative" (Puckett and Halladay 2006).

There was considerable apprehension leading up to Derby weekend 2006 and the planned police enforcement of the "no cruising" ordinance. Even those who favored ending cruising, such as *The Defender*, were skeptical such an accomplishment could be made without considerable backlash and a potential for conflict between the police and young cruisers. On the Thursday before Derby weekend, *The Defender* contained an article voicing the concern:

> "The question is: Will Broadway cruising come down to a test of wills between the police and the cruisers? And if so, how far will police go to enforce their regulations? As we have stated before, combating cruising has to be a cooperative effort of the police and the community. African American community leaders must take the lead to keep calm on Broadway this Derby weekend. Because a confrontation between law enforcement and cruisers could quickly degenerate into the type of scene that could blemish Derby for everyone" (The Louisville Defender 2006c).

Ending Derby cruising required significant planning and manpower on part of the police department. To enforce the restrictions, the police department assigned over 400 officers to patrol and monitor Broadway (Smith 2006b). In a brief interview, a police spokesperson described how they intended to present an "overwhelming" force to dissuade anyone from trying to provoke the situation. This included zero tolerance for lewd behavior, profanity, violence, as well as anything resembling cruising behavior. In advance of Derby weekend, police distributed "passes" to residents and business owners along the Broadway corridor. Having a pass indicated to police, who would also set up roadblocks restricting access to Broadway, that you had a "legitimate" reason to be on Broadway that weekend. Broadway restrictions were to go into effect Friday afternoon at 4 pm and continue through Sunday and included the entire length of Broadway in downtown

Louisville, from Baxter Avenue in the east to Shawnee Park in the west. In all, the police department printed and distributed approximately 20,000 Broadway passes for West Louisville residents and business owners (Halladay 2006e). Even for Derby cruising critics in the West End, this heavy-handed approach seemed to go too far. The barricades and roadblocks represented a militarization of the West End that fed into the stereotypes and stigmatization of the area. In letters to the *Courier-Journal* editor, observers compared the scene to similar ones in Palestine, the U.S. South under Jim Crow, and South Africa under apartheid (see the *Courier-Journal*'s Readers' Forum from 5/9/06, 5/10/06, and 5/13/06).

The police department's severe policies ultimately were successful in quelling any potential unrest, and Derby weekend 2006 came and went without major problems. The police department's plan was successful at preventing any semblance of cruising from appearing on West Broadway. So much so, that Broadway was described as largely a vacant roadway, with only police cars and officers, emergency vehicles, and a few scattered private vehicles coming and going (Smith, Hershberg, and Tompkins 2006). The lack of any kind of turnout, even just pedestrian activity, was a crushing blow to the vendor's fair being held at the Phillip Morris lot. Virtually no one showed up, and vendors were unable to sell much of anything (Davis 2006). Other businesses along Broadway that had benefited in years past from the crowds of people on Derby weekend, also suffered. A restaurant owner was quoted, "It's a disaster. I spent thousands of dollars to prepare extra food and help. I usually have them lined up around this building" (Smith 2006b). Other businesses suffered similar fates. Even the few business owners who had previously complained about the heavy congestion from cruising admitted that situation was better than the current one, which entailed no people at all.

On the subject of ending Derby cruising, an interviewee had an interesting perspective on how he perceived the city handled the situation:

> "I think a lot of people who initially wanted them to stop cruising didn't understand that the police force in this city is not a surgical tool but a blunt instrument. You can't perform heart surgery with a sledgehammer. So it wasn't just that cruising was shut down, all of Broadway was shut down. The vendors, some of the most family-oriented events… It's funny some of the ministers were complaining about the vulgarity of the cruising that was happening on Derby weekend, but the police also shut down the vendors, which was the most family-oriented event during Derby cruising. The vendors didn't have anywhere to go, they were relegated to Philip Morris. When they shut down Broadway completely, they shut down all of the foot traffic. The people who were calling on the police force to just ruin one part of cruising, didn't understand that the police, in order to stop cruising, had to anesthetize, had to sanitize the entire West end."

Despite the massive police force on Broadway, some people did still show up and try to cruise, just not on Broadway. The side streets and crossing streets on Broadway were packed with cars, many with people from out of town who had either not heard the news about shutting down cruising or just came anyway (Smith 2006a). *The Defender* described the scene: "(closing Broadway) forced partygoers onto side streets, where vehicles were displaying neon lights and upward-flipping doors. Some of the cars had passengers hanging out windows. Many vehicles had out-of-state plates. Pedestrians socialized and played dice along the sidewalks" (The Louisville Defender 2006a). However, whenever any "street party" type atmosphere began to develop at any of the intersections, police were quickly on hand to dispel the crowd. For Derby weekend, another group of community leaders had tried to organize a "community barbecue" in Shawnee and Chickasaw parks, but it too suffered from lack of attendance (Davis 2006). Indeed, with police restricting vehicle access to the parks, even those who had wanted to attend would have had a hard time getting there. One resident spoke of the atmosphere in West Louisville this particular Derby weekend, "They're harassing people like cattle in the West End. Derby used to be

a big thing for black folks, and they've taken it away from us" (Davis 2006). The Derby Music Jam at the Water Tower suffered a similar fate. Fewer than 80 cars showed up to participate in the events, and attendance was light. Organizers said people felt harassed and intimidated by the massive police presence on River Road, even though they were miles away from West Louisville (Edelen and Batcheldor 2006).

Even with these problems, Derby weekend passed without any major incidents, and city officials declared the anti-cruising efforts a success. An editorial in the *Courier-Journal* dismissed the complaints from businesses and residents as "understandable" while acknowledging they may have been "inconvenienced" (The Courier-Journal 2006). *The Defender* was a little more outspoken in standing up for the West Louisville business community:

> "in solving one problem police created several others, including wrecking business for numerous Broadway vendors on what would have been their largest revenue weekend of the year. For example, owners of Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken on West Broadway expected a banner weekend this Derby with out of town visitors and their regular Saturday customers dining at the restaurant. Instead of overflow crowds, Derby Saturday's lunch rush consisted of two customers and $15 in receipts" (The Louisville Defender 2006b).

A series of post-Derby forums and community meetings were held in West Louisville, allowing residents to vent some of their concerns about the city's handling of the weekend. Some referred to the city's shutdown of cruising as "racist" and "dehumanizing" (Halladay 2006b). The Rev. Louis Coleman was particularly vocal, characterizing the police crackdown as an "apartheid practice", and arguing, "You want to talk about racial profiling, this was neighborhood profiling" (Halladay 2006b). Some called for the city to try and compromise in allowing some aspects of cruising without allowing it to get out of hand. But such efforts yielded little response from city officials.

After Cruising

Despite the considerable negative economic impact on West Louisville businesses the ending of cruising had in 2006, Metro Police made similar plans for restricting access to Broadway for Derby weekend 2007. Police Chief White was quoted, "I realize it's an inconvenience. It's an inconvenience that has to happen" (Halladay 2007b). Beginning Friday afternoon of Derby weekend, West Broadway was again blockaded by police; only those cars with police-issued passes were allowed on the road throughout the weekend. The restrictions this year only applied to West Broadway from 9th Street to 34th Street; East Broadway was exempt. One positive change was that the police would not be restricting automobile access to the two major parks, Shawnee and Chickasaw, during the daylight hours of Derby weekend (Halladay 2007c).

As in 2006, police officers were to patrol West Broadway en masse, with over 400 officers assigned to the area for the weekend (Kenning 2007). Participants labeled the event "Derby cruising light," in reference to the smaller but still significant turnout of people despite the considerable police presence. Attempts to provide alternative venues for former Derby cruising participants were only been moderately successful. A car show featuring New York-based DJ Funkmaster Flex was held at the Water Tower on River Road and drew approximately 5,000 people – a significant number but far lower than what cruising normally attracted (Hershberg and Gagliardi 2007). At the "cruising light" scene on West Broadway, 180 arrests were made as part of the police's emphasis on "no tolerance" (Halladay 2007a). Despite the high number of arrests, though, none were for violent crimes and most were the result of misdemeanors.

After the previous year's failures, the West Louisville business community had prepared the worst. The Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken on West Broadway, which had traditionally experienced heavy business on Derby weekend, decided to not even open for the weekend. An editorial in the *Courier-Journal* addressed such concerns:

> "Not all neighborhoods suffer equally, but perhaps we should keep our eyes on the prize: the Kentucky Derby, which for more than 100 years has infused billions into the local treasury and helps to pay for efforts that benefit Louisvillians year-round. And that's at least worth thinking about when you're stuck in traffic or some police officer is demanding that you move on when your final destination is just ahead" (The Courier-Journal 2007).

Like so many other *Courier-Journal* editorials on the subject of Derby cruising's ending, this one is notable for its condescension and willful ignorance. It mentions the billions of dollars infused into the local economy, but fails to acknowledge that it is not anyone in West Louisville getting rich off Derby tourism. To the contrary, what few tourist dollars that were going to West Louisville businesses were effectively shut off by the police barricades on West Broadway. Additionally, the editorial makes the leap that shutting down Derby cruising was necessary in order to maintain the success of the Kentucky Derby. This speaks volumes to how fearful city boosters were of cruising tarnishing the image of the revered Kentucky Derby Festival.

With the massive police presence planned again for West Louisville, the annual vendor's fair was called off by organizers (Halladay 2007d). The vendor's fair had suffered considerably the year before, as traffic restrictions had made accessing the fair along West Broadway difficult. Fewer vendors had showed up, and even fewer patrons were there to support the fair. Additionally, the location for the vendor's fair in 2006 - the vacant Phillip Morris lot - was no longer owned by the city and available for festival use. The vendor's fair had originally been devised years ago as a deterrent to cruising on West Broadway by

closing a section of the road, serving as a buffer between businesses on Broadway and residential neighborhoods, and providing a more "family-oriented" festival scene, complete with live music, food, and carnival rides for children. With the ending of the vendor's fair in 2007, West Louisville was left with few, if any, organized activities for Derby weekend.

The ending of Derby cruising did not go without legal challenge. In Spring of 2007, the Justice Resources Center, led by Rev. Louis Coleman, and two West Broadway business owners requested an injunction in the U.S. District Court to prevent the police restrictions on Derby weekend. The request argued that the city's plan would "cause great profit loss to black-owned businesses" along West Broadway, in violation of the 14th Constitutional Amendment guaranteeing equal all citizens full and equal benefit of all laws (White 2007). The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) weighed in on the issue, describing the police crackdown as "classic racial profiling" (Adams 2007b). After several days of hearings, U. S. District Judge Jennifer B. Coffman ruled in favor of the city by declining to block the plans to restrict access on West Broadway. Coffman based her judgment on concerns of "public safety and the free flow of traffic", and argued that "the inability of police to respond to situations where they were needed" in 2005 because of cruising gridlock (Adams 2007a).

In subsequent years, the memory of Derby cruising began to fade a bit from public consciousness, but not entirely. The vendor's fair was never able to recover from the ending of cruising, and it was never held again in West Louisville as part of a Derby celebration. In 2008, a police force of 300 patrolled and intermittently shut down sections of West Broadway on Derby weekend despite the light turnout of potential cruisers (White

2008). In May of 2008, the renowned Actors Theatre of Louisville put on a community inspired performance entitled *Cruising the Divide*. The script, which was informed by interviews with Derby cruising participants, sought to demonstrate the wide variety of conceptions/misconceptions held toward Derby cruising, the ending of which was still a sensitive issue in the city. The play was performed twice, once at Actors Theatre and once at the Braden Center on West Broadway.

By 2009, police-issued "passes" for West Broadway were no longer deemed necessary, and police removed the barricades from West Broadway on Derby weekend. The Derby scene on West Broadway was observed as "not anything out of the ordinary" (Udell 2009), and cruising had effectively vanished. Still, even as recently as 2012, a heightened police presence was visible on West Broadway for Derby weekend to ensure that Derby cruising showed no signs of resurrecting (Udell 2012).

Conclusion

> "For the dominant hegemonic classes, the crisis lies not in the simple existence of minority youth, but in their potential to extend their influence and grow in importance beyond the confines of the ghetto, which constitutes a socially sanctioned area designated primarily to the uses of minority populations. Fundamentally, it is a problem of containment: containment in a spatial and physical sense pertaining to the institution of "vertical ghettoes" or public housing high-rise structures, or, in broader cultural terms, containment as a crisis founded in the inability to sustain the traditional authority of European-based value systems." (Forman 2002)

This chapter has chronicled the events that led up to and constituted the ending of Derby cruising in Louisville. A Derby weekend of violence in 2005 associated - both directly and indirectly - with the West Broadway cruising scene gave city leaders the needed opening to put forth an argument against cruising based on concerns over public safety. Media outlets in Louisville, led by the *Courier-Journal* editorial board, repeatedly

put forth calls for ending Derby cruising by appealing to the moral sensibilities of Louisville's citizenry. Beginning in 2006, the police department blockaded West Broadway on Derby weekend, only allowing those with city-issued residential 'passes' to drive along the corridor. Such efforts, when repeated each subsequent year, were successful in eliminating any semblance of Derby cruising. With cruising's demise and the heavy-handed police tactics used to end it, the West Louisville organized vendor's fair ultimately went by the wayside as well, as few people showed up and community morale was deflated amid the massive police presence. In the eight years since cruising's ending, no community-wide festival has been put forth as a replacement Derby event, and a majority of West Louisville residents remain marginalized outside the official Kentucky Derby Festival.

For the city, the ending of Derby cruising constituted a successful attempt to control the imagery and representations associated with Derby weekend. The massive popularity of Derby cruising resulted in widespread media coverage each year in the early 2000s, to the point to where Derby cruising was the lead and most prominent 'local' news story covered that weekend outside of the actual Derby at Churchill Downs. In the *Courier-Journal*, articles covering Derby cruising were top-center on the front page beyond the special Derby section. Local television news stations had reporters live on the cruising scene nightly to describe the celebratory and sometimes transgressive behaviors of revelers on West Broadway. This attention away from the official Derby Festival and toward the transgressive behaviors highlighted by the local media was a concern that needed to be addressed. After the ending of cruising, the city and Derby Festival committee once again

controlled the official narrative of what Derby time meant and represented for Louisvillians.

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Implications for West Louisville

The year 2005 was the last in which West Louisville experienced a community-wide festival event for Derby weekend. In the eight years since, small events have gone on in West Louisville directly associated with the Festival, such as TheSlice: Spice, Style and Soul, a day-long food festival accompanied by live blues, R&B, and jazz entertainment. Such events represent some inroads the Festival committee has made into the West Louisville community, and certainly represent an improvement over the complete lack of inclusion of West Louisville into the Derby Festival in decades prior. Additionally, the annual unaffiliated Screaming Eagles Derby party and barbecue still goes on, as it seemingly always has. Still, the legacy of Derby cruising lingers large, as those who experienced and appreciated the West Broadway scene during those years remember well what a community-wide festival could be like in West Louisville for Derby weekend.

In nearly every interview conducted for this dissertation, the issue of whether or not the city was 'justified' in ending Derby cruising, particularly in the manner in which the police enforced the No Cruising ordinance, was addressed. Some of these responses illuminate the conflicting or ambivalent nature of perceptions toward cruising's ending:

> "I was just always very nervous about seeing police at every intersection, standing there blocking off streets. It's a chilling feeling having the perimeter of your community surrounded by barricades. I don't know if they recognized that… And I think that was the beginning of the resentment was just, at every intersection, barricade, barricade, barricade. A perimeter around your community. And we didn't want to see that anymore than those guys wanted to do that. I mean they were away from their families. And here they were stuck, just standing there watching stuff that they didn't want to watch. But I didn't think they ever did an adequate job of getting the traffic directed properly and moving properly, and then it just turned into a mess, and then the only answer was just stopping it. Like

> I said I can't say they were justified, I understand why they wanted to get a handle on it, but they never did get a handle on it."

This resident refers to the massive police presence in West Louisville as leaving a "chilling feeling" among residents. With roads barricaded and police controlling the movement of cruisers and residents alike to and from neighborhoods, it led to "resentment" from the community regarding the manner in which the city tried to monitor and patrol cruising. This resident wants to be sympathetic toward the police tactics deployed during cruising, saying "I understand why they wanted to get a handle on it." However, the ultimate failure of the police's efforts to adequately monitor cruising and curb the bad behavior led the city to overreact and put an end the events altogether. This theme of skepticism toward the police's actions was constant among nearly every person interviewed, regardless of their particular feelings toward cruising. Nearly every person interviewed was unhappy with the way in which the police handled the events, particularly with the ending of cruising. As one interviewee described,

> "And I think it was fine until, I think the final insult was the pass thing, when they tried to do the passes or whatever. That was the ultimate insult. When they actually wanted people to have passes to get access, it was crazy. Not good. And a lot of the businesses, what they ended up doing, especially the corporations, they just closed down. They literally just closed down at twelve o'clock or whatever else. They just decided they weren't gonna be a part."

For this person, the police-issued passes to residents which were meant to control access to West Louisville during Derby weekend were "the ultimate insult." The passes effectively restricted the freedom of movement or mobility of people to and from West Louisville. In a sense, the police become gatekeepers that got to decide who was and was not allowed to drive up and down the streets. It is difficult to imagine the city enforcing this sort of heavy-handed police treatment in any other section of the city besides the

economically depressed and racially homogenous African American area of West Louisville.

> "Those barricades are powerful. As soon as a barricade comes out, it just, you don't want a ticket, you don't want to get pulled over, cause nine times out of ten you come down to Broadway you probably got a beer in your car, somebody got a beer in the car. So you don't want to go through the trouble of getting your liquor poured out, your licenses and everybody's names getting ran, a lot of people come out who might have warrant who don't wanna get stopped, you know what I'm saying. So you'll just keep on going."

This former cruiser describes the experience of trying to go to West Broadway for Derby after the police began enforcing the no cruising ordinance. In one way, this resident reinforces some of the negative stereotypes people held toward Derby cruising, mentioning that "nine times out of ten" someone in the car is going to have an open container of alcohol, or even worse, one of the car passengers might have an outstanding warrant and would want to avoid any involvement with the police. In the full context from which this quote was taken, however, the resident ultimately believes these transgressions to be minor and ultimately harmless. In his experience, the overwhelming majority of cruisers were only out to have a good time, not to cause trouble.

> "Anything they do is gonna be a negative impact on West Louisville. Because as long as they can keep it us versus them, they're gonna say what they want. And I don't believe in those things. Cause we're looking at how do we get rid of, as we call it, the 9th Street divide. How do we move that invisible line?… And then the media comes along, and makes it black, white, Hispanic. Here you are separated. I'm not gonna separate, because the bottom line is still green. If the underlying cause of it is green and greed, then guess who's gonna profit when those two are fighting against each other. Certainly not you two. Look at the person standing on the sideline."

This resident highlights the importance of the media in framing the debate over Derby cruising. She refers to the "9th Street divide," which serves as the informal barrier between downtown Louisville and West Louisville. She argues that the media is always framing issues involving West Louisville as "us versus them", and in doing so, reinforcing

the racialization and stigmatization of West Louisville in a "negative impact." This resident sees beyond the racial divide to emphasize the importance of the color "green", or the money underlying how decisions are truly made in the city. In other words, while the media focused on traffic and bad behavior as being the reasons for why the city ended Derby cruising, she believes the real reason is that Derby cruising was perceived as a threat to the wider Kentucky Derby Festival. And any such threat to this powerful economic engine in the city would not be tolerated.

> "Due to how the city reacted to cruising, it put such a negative light off of the Derby Festival in West Louisville, it has killed a lot of activity in and of itself. A lot of people just look at it very badly. A lot of people in West Louisville view it as a weekend to leave rather than as a weekend to participate. So now a lot of people are exploring other options, saying you know I should just leave and maybe rent out my house rather than participate in the Derby Festival, because there's nothing in the city that really fits me. It could be better. They'd have a better presence to include the city at large, but they really just focus on downtown and Churchill Downs."

This resident describes the aftermath of Derby cruising's ending in West Louisville. He emphasizes the symbolic importance of the city ending cruising in such a negative and forceful way. Whatever little buy-in that West Louisvillians had started to feel toward the Kentucky Derby Festival as a result of the success and popularity of Derby cruising had evaporated with cruising's demise. In other words, not only had the city quashed Derby cruising, but they had also quashed any semblance of Derby Festival spirit that begun to take hold in West Louisville. Now, people viewed Derby weekend as a time to leave rather than participate. The forceful ending of Derby cruising had merely reinforced long held feelings of exclusion and marginalization outside of the official city Derby Festival, resulting in ambivalence toward the Derby itself.

> "It was a very touchy thing the city had to go through. Because of the way they handled it, I think it was bad. And then you're like "was it racist?".

> Well, I don't know if it was racist, you're just dealing with poor people. And you got poor white people in Portland, so they got the same treatment. So I don't think it's necessarily about race. Nowadays its not so much about a person's skin color, it's more like what's your socioeconomic in a lot of ways now. What's your pedigree, where you from, who do you know? And poor people often get the short end of the stick, and I just think that had a lot to do with it."

The issue of what role 'race' played in the city's enforcement of the No Cruising ordinance was often of concern for observers. For this resident, race was superseded by socioeconomic class in terms of importance toward explaining the city's actions. He mentions the presence of the Portland neighborhood, which is the only section of West Louisville that still contains any significant number of white residents, to argue that it was not only black residents affected by the shutting down of West Broadway. It should be noted, though, that Portland is located in the far north section of West Louisville, many blocks away from West Broadway, and has easy access to several highways leading to and from the neighborhood. Other people interviewed, similarly, minimized the role of race in ending cruising by referring to the city's actions in the 1980s to end the street party atmosphere that had sprung up on Central Avenue near Churchill Downs on Derby weekend. That impromptu party scene was similar in that it included large numbers of partyers taking to the streets and acting irreverently - in effect an extension of the Churchill Downs infield party scene during Derby. One notable difference being that the Central Avenue party scene included large numbers of white revelers, as opposed to the Derby cruising scene on West Broadway two decades later that was mostly African American. The argument was made that, because the police had similarly ended the Central Avenue party scene in the 1980s, this minimized the role of race toward explaining the city's actions toward Derby cruising.

The relevance of socioeconomic class is, undoubtedly, a critical factor in understanding the city's actions to end these types of celebrations. Here, too, the role of the streets is important in explaining how fears of youthful and transgressive festival behaviors in public spaces are viewed as potentially dangerous and detrimental to the image of the official Kentucky Derby Festival. For these reasons, it is safe to say the 'race' was not the sole determiner in explaining the ending of Derby cruising.

That is not, however, to minimize the role 'race' played in the events that transpired. As was explored in Chapter 7, race was certainly implicated in explaining the importance of Derby cruising to African Americans in West Louisville. Many black Louisvillians have long felt excluded from the official Derby Festival, and having Derby cruising and the associated vendor's fair located within and operated by African Americans in West Louisville resulted in a heightened sense of community pride and even association with the Derby Festival. Ending Derby cruising in such a heavy-handed manner undoubtedly reinforced feelings of socioeconomic marginalization, not only from the festival but from the city at large. Additionally, there was no effort by the city or Festival committee to 'replace' Derby cruising with any other more legitimate Derby celebration in West Louisville. For many residents, an important cultural festival was taken away by the city with little or no regard for the wider repercussions of what such actions represented. In this way, 'race' was implicated in the ending of Derby cruising because of the long history of exclusion, marginalization, and segregation of African Americans in Louisville's West End.

Contributions

At the outset of this project, my initial research centered exclusively on Derby cruising. I was aware of the powerful emotions attached by many to the events, both because of the symbolic importance of the events in availing West Louisvillians to participate in the Derby Festival and assert a uniquely West Louisvillian identity within the broader framework of identities associated with the city and the festival. The manifestation of these initial research efforts are captured most particularly in the final chapters of this dissertation.

As research for this dissertation expanded, I learned about the police protests of 2000 that had become associated with Derby cruising. It became quickly apparent that understanding the protests was critical to understanding what cruising meant to both participants and outside observers. As I dug deeper into the police protests, I learned about the open housing protests of 1967 that also became associated with the Derby Festival. From there I began to conceive of a broader narrative to be told about the relationship between the West Louisville African American community and the Derby Festival, one that involved the close intertwining of cultural festivities and political activities. Through this narrative I hoped to explore how the transgressive practices of Derby cruisers fit within a legacy of protesting the city's established order at Derby time.

It is under this structural framework that I argue for Derby cruising as a form of opposition or protest toward the city and the official Festival. Through interviews with West Louisvillians who had attached strong emotional significance to the events, I began to understand the transgressive practices of cruisers as not simply just "kids being kids", but rather as an effort to subvert the city's official narrative of what constituted Derby

celebration. These understandings all meshed well with Bakhtin's conception of the "carnivalesque," where festival time enables oppressed or marginalized populations to subvert and transgress the dominant norms as a form of opposition to the established order. While acknowledging the importance of Bakhtin's carnivalesque, this dissertation moves beyond these theorizations in two ways.

First, this dissertation moves beyond simply interpreting the transgressive practices of Derby cruising by linking these actions historically within a concerted effort of West Louisville African Americans to protest for improved conditions through the Derby Festival. These efforts can be understood under a framework of non-violent direct action

Second, this dissertation argues for the importance of space in constituting, mediating, and defining how these practices were performed and received. The streets hold particular symbolic importance in public discourse, and "occupying" the streets, whether in the form of formalized protest movements or as informal transgressive and subversive festival performances, increases the magnitude of the public voice being projected. Occupying the streets asserts a right to the city and affirms a unique sense of belonging for West Louisvillians. Occupying the streets entails a corporal presence within these public spaces, one through which notions of identity, belonging, public memory, and ultimately, transgression, were produced and contested. This corporal presence is productive of new spaces, transgressive spaces that contest the status quo in the city. It was through the association with the Derby Festival that these spaces were opened and such contestations made public.

This dissertation has examined the theme of festival by exploring how the relationship between residents of West Louisville and the Kentucky Derby Festival has

evolved through the spaces of West Louisville. As a public expression of community values, ideology, or celebration, festival offers abundant opportunity to examine the inherent intertwinings of cultural and political activities. In this context, festival is theorized as encapsulating several linked cultural/political themes. These include celebration, community-building, belonging, identity expression, transgression, and protest. These themes are at times mutually supportive and at other times at odds with one another. Because of the popularity and high visibility of festival performances, well-developed understandings of how these sorts of community representations are produced through festival are important.

This dissertation has incorporated these multiple themes associated with festival in order to help illuminate the fractured relationship between the African American community of West Louisville and the city-wide Kentucky Derby Festival. As this dissertation has demonstrated, the Kentucky Derby Festival has historically played a unique role in the political activities of the African American community in the city. This is not to overstate the role of festival in political movements. Certainly the political actions, movements, and accomplishments are larger than and exist apart from the Derby Festival. Nevertheless, as this dissertation has demonstrated, at least two critical junctures of protest movements over the last fifty years, the Derby Festival has been leveraged against the city by protest organizers. This was certainly true in 1967 during the Open Housing movement, as protesters disrupted horse races leading up to the Derby, Festival events were cancelled, and the national media was on hand to broadcast the political maneuverings of the protesters to a national audience. Despite the buildup, the Derby itself, was left alone by protesters.

A more recent manifestation of this was during the anti-police brutality protests of 2000. The legacy of protesting for social justice, and utilizing the Kentucky Derby Festival as the arena to broadcast the voice of protest to a wider audience, was carried through to Derby cruising. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the city of Louisville was the site of considerable tension between African American residents of West Louisville and the Louisville Police Department, which had been implicated in numerous instances of violence toward black men. Oppositional politics coalesced around Derby cruising as the potential site to bring the voice of protest to a larger stage. This dissertation demonstrates how, despite the city's eventual shuttering of Derby cruising, the events were successful at fulfilling some political objectives, even if these objectives were not well-defined or originally purposeful.

This tension between the lasting accomplishments of festival protest and the fleeting nature of such movements has been of great interest to scholars examining the political nature of cultural festivals (e.g. Cohen 1993, 1982; Marston 2002, 1989). Some have been critical of the utility of these connections, arguing that festival transgression and protest merely serves as a "safety valve" for maintaining the status quo, whereby built up tensions resulting from socio-economic marginalization are vented during festival time (e.g. Ravenscroft and Gilchrist 2009; Ravenscroft and Matteucci 2003; Elias 1978). Once festival time has passed, however, the status quo remains in place. Findings from this dissertation argue against the safety valve thesis by demonstrating how protest movements have successfully utilized the presence of festival to achieve substantial and permanent political gain.

Understanding the geography of such festival protests is critical in exploring how these processes are performed from within, represented, and perceived beyond. In the case of Derby cruising, the 'streets' played an important role in both the symbolic significance of Derby cruising and the strongly oppositional stance taken by cruising opponents. In the U.S., the streets have been used traditionally to assert a group's 'right' to the city and/or lay claim symbolically to a specific place or neighborhood within the city (e.g. Mitchell 2003, 1995; Forman 2002b, 2000). For African American residents living in the marginalized West End of Louisville, Derby cruising also offered an opportunity for participants to engage communally and promote cultural creativity. In this way, the streets became a space of representation directed not only toward the African American community but to the city, and because of the timing of the events on Derby weekend, the rest of the world as well. The location of the festivities in the 'streets' also played a significant role in framing the opposition to cruising. Because Derby cruising took place in the streets, critics framed the event as one that was 'uncontrollable' and 'lawless'. These sentiments gained traction because of the public location of the festivities, not only in the streets, but in the streets of the racialized West End of Louisville. Undoubtedly there existed some substantial problems with cruising, in terms of the traffic and potential safety risks, but these problems also existed with other Derby festival events, including Thunder Over Louisville and the actual Running of the Roses. What set cruising apart was that it was more spontaneous, and therefore less-managed by the city, and this led many residents to fear for what could potentially happen.

Central to these understandings of what Derby cruising represented is the notion of transgression. Bakhtin first explored the political significance of festival transgression

through the notion of the carnivalesque. For Bakhtin, carnivalesque practices represented a resistance to the dominant order, and festival time became a critical opportunity for oppressed populations to subvert dominant authority. Such practices are of particular relevance to this research within the context of African American and Afro-Caribbean populations who share in a diasporic legacy of slavery, oppression, resistance, and transgression (e.g. Gilroy 1993; Irobi 2007; Hudson 1997; Hall 1990). In the streets of West Louisville, transgressive festival practices served as a direct flaunting of the official Kentucky Derby Festival. Here, too, the spaces of Derby cruising, i.e. the ghettoized streets of West Louisville, were critical in establishing an aura of cultural 'authenticity', as espoused through the often discussed hip-hop worldview. In this way, festival transgression served as an opportunity for African American youth to assert a uniquely West Louisville identity that was ambivalently both a part of and yet also opposed to the established order. In no way was Derby cruising "Disneyfied", or stripped of its true transgressive nature under tight control of officials. Ultimately, this lack of control served as the undoing of the events, as city leaders sought to reassert their authority and reaffirm their understanding of how the Kentucky Derby Festival should be celebrated.

Beyond protest and transgression, this dissertation has also explored the ways in which Derby cruising served as a mechanism to bolster community representation and belonging. Derby cruising can be imagined historically as fitting well within the African American tradition of using parades and street festivals to claim space and assert group identity (e.g. Fabre 1994; Lewis 1996; Davis 1986; Brown and Kimball 1996). Though Derby cruising began simply as an outlet for African American youth to celebrate Derby weekend in a more transgressive manner, over time West Louisville community and

business leaders incorporated into the events more community and family centered activities. For large segments of the West Louisville community, these types of activities represented a more positive, and less transgressive, community identity that reinforced notions of belonging both to the neighborhood and the city's Kentucky Derby Festival at large. These competing notions of belonging to / opposed to the official festival represent the multiple and oftentimes overlapping meanings attributed to Derby cruising.

Ultimately, though, while some viewed the events as a local tradition and an opportunity for the community to celebrate and attract visitors from around the region, others viewed the events as a traffic nightmare and cultural embarrassment that showcased the worst elements of urban youth culture. Even for those who held a negative opinion of Derby cruising itself, nearly everyone was disappointed and opposed to the way in which the city and police department handled the closure of the annual activities. The massive police presence, roadblocks, and mandatory automobile passes felt like a massive overreach by the city, one that would not have been acceptable or tolerated in other, whiter parts of the city. The controversy remains alive in public discourse and continues to reveal rifts in the city between black and white, east and west, and even divides within the African American community in the West End.

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PUBLICATIONS

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