

Introduction

Germantown, a neighborhood in the northwest section of Philadelphia, possesses a rich and well documented history dating back to the 15th Century.¹ Nonetheless, Germantown's most recent history has been characterized by racial tension and declining economic conditions. What had once been the summer suburb for Philadelphia's merchant class has evolved to mirror the problems of many postwar American cities; experiencing what has been dubbed "white flight" and "urban decay." Even as Germantown underwent its many social and economic transformations, its numerous historical sites continued to be maintained and nationally recognized.² It is the purpose of this thesis to understand and examine the coexistence of historical preservation in Germantown with the characteristics of the Germantown neighborhood. More specifically, to look at the effects that historical preservation has had in Germantown from the standpoint of economic and community development. The analysis of this relationship will speak to what can be done in Germantown to promote the growth of new businesses and community organizations that will help improve the social and economic conditions in Germantown.

Community and Economic Development

In a broad sense, community and economic development can be defined in the following way:

The process by which local people build organizations and partnerships that interconnect profitable business with other interests and

¹ Keyser, Naaman et al. *History of Old Germantown*. Philadelphia: Horace F. McCann, 1907, 21.

² Anderson, Elijah. *Code of the Street*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 1999, 21.

values - for example, skills and education, health, housing, and the environment. In CED a lot more people get involved, describing how the community should change. A lot more organizations look for ways to make their actions and investments reinforce the wishes and intentions of the whole community. Business becomes a means to accumulate wealth and to make the local way of life more creative, inclusive, and sustainable - now and 20 or 30 years from now.³

Inherent in this definition is the sustainability of neighborhood revitalization as well as the dedication of community members toward the initiative. Furthermore, the creation of partnerships between different facets of economic and community life, such as housing and education, is central to creating a unified strategy within a neighborhood for renewal efforts. Community and economic development has generally been concerned with one dimensional approaches, which are too often opportunistic, short term, and unsystematic.⁴ In this sense, the term community and economic development encompasses systematic plans for economic change that primarily involve community members as opposed to outsiders.

The broad and malleable definition of community and economic development allows it to be interpreted in many different ways. As pointed out by Tony McCall, this is both one of its strengths and its weaknesses; it can describe community capacity, economic development plans for a specific geographical area, or the creation of a community business, among other things. In this sense, when talking about community and economic development, effective strategies are often just as vital a focus as are the actual outcomes. Among the most notable and consistently successful strategies for community and economic development are, primarily, recognition of the “potential” of an area, whether that is through leadership, location, natural endowments, or the local

³ Centre for Community Enterprise. “Community Economic Development.” 2001-2003. Available <<http://www.cedworks.com/CEDdefinition.html>> November 2006.

⁴ <<http://www.cedworks.com/CEDdefinition.html>>

economic base. Training, experience, and understaffing encompass a second realm; while it is certainly important to have strong leadership, at the same time it is essential to ensure that community leaders are not overstretched and have available, well trained, and capable assistance. Lastly, community and economic initiatives are most successful when they are “bottom up,” grass roots, and community driven.⁵

In this sense, if we see Germantown’s historic sites as its potential, we can see the possibility of creating community and economic development initiatives there. The primary goal of this paper is to first develop an understanding of this potential; the relationship between the area’s “resources” and the current, everyday situation in Germantown. In the same vein, this research aims to evaluate community and economic development efforts from both the side of the Germantown community as well as from the perspective of the historic sites. For example, how well known are the sites within the community? What are the sites currently doing to involve themselves in the community? How are the sites either advertised or isolated within the community? These main questions will help inform our evaluation on the current conditions of historical preservation and community and economic development in Germantown as well as lead us to answers about what needs to be changed in the future in order for community and economic initiatives to have more of an effective impact.

. Using the general definition and successful strategies of community and economic development, I have fleshed out three central criteria for successful community and economic development efforts as they pertain to Germantown’s unique conditions.

First, the organization and mobilization must be community driven with the primary

⁵ McCall, Tony. “Institutional Design for Community Economic Development Models: Issues of Opportunity and Capacity.” *Community Development Journal*. Vol. 38, No 2. April 2003, p. 96-108, 97-98.

contribution stemming from direct involvement and input from Germantown residents and historical preservers. Second, while the plan should be somewhat organically inspired, it must have a systematic approach and plan of attack. Many past plans for development in Germantown were short lived due to a lack of unity between the historic sites and disagreements between community members.⁶ In this sense, the approach must be no nonsense with a unified strategy to which everyone agrees. Lastly, and hopefully, we will be able to judge initiatives by the results of these plans through examples of job and business creation as well as aesthetic results; revitalization and occupation of abandoned buildings, a decrease in vandalism and increased greenery/walkability along Germantown Avenue. The realization of all three of these goals is clearly optimistic. Nonetheless, each goal is essential to an effective community and economic plan for sustainable change that can be maintained by the community.

Background of Germantown

At first glance, it is hard to believe that the decidedly urban landscape of Germantown was once the original Philadelphia suburb. Founded in 1683, Germantown was home to German Quakers and Mennonites, characterized by religious tolerance and progressive politics.⁷ German immigration increased into the 16th century, and after the American Revolution Germantown became a popular location for summer houses for wealthy Philadelphians, many of which still stand and contribute to the architectural diversity of the area. The development of the railroad, brought to Germantown in 1832, “did a great deal toward Americanizing Germantown, which up to that time had been

⁶ David Young, Executive Director at Cliveden. Personal Communication, October 2006

⁷ Spencer, David. *Historic Germantown*. Philadelphia: Horace F McCann, 1908, 9.

largely German in its characteristics, with the German tongue still heard in most of its churches and commonly on the street.”⁸ Germantown’s status as a railroad suburb remained relatively stable into the 20th century. The migration of African Americans north in the first half of the 20th century drastically changed Germantown’s landscape and demography. Between 1954 and 1956, Germantown experienced an influx of African Americans, ultimately causing a decline in property values and the departure of the neighborhood by the majority of white residents to the suburbs.⁹

The current demography of Germantown speaks to this history. Germantown is 80.8% black and 14.5% white, with about 1% Asian and 2% of mixed racial background¹⁰ (See Figure 1.) In his study of Germantown Avenue, Germantown’s main artery, Elijah Anderson describes the perceived racial identity of Germantown: “On the avenue Germantown gives the appearance of a segregated, black, working-class neighborhood. But this is deceptive. Many whites, including middle-class whites along with middle-class blacks, do live here, but they tend to avoid the business district.”¹¹ Indeed, the existence of certain types of businesses overwhelms the landscape of Germantown and blurs its rich history. On Germantown Avenue, beeper stores, check cashing agencies, and snack food stores are the standard businesses, adjacent to vacant lots and abandoned or boarded up houses. Still, the historical sites remain and “are cared for in ways that suggest that people appreciate their historic status.”¹² Hence, the neighborhood of Germantown is somewhat of a paradox; at once reflecting common

⁸ Keyser 116.

⁹ Countryman, Michael. *Up South*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006, 72.

¹⁰ 2000 US Census. Available <www.census.gov> November 2006

¹¹ Anderson, 21.

¹² Anderson, 21

perceptions of the “ghetto” while in reality possessing a rich history and a more racially and economically diverse population than its landscape would imply.

This irony in Germantown is what both makes it interesting and is one of its greatest challenges. Germantown is already experiencing some forms of gentrification, with property values increasing in the last five years.¹³ Still, Germantown lacks a stable and safe business district to serve its middle class population. The historic sites could theoretically serve as a springboard for new forms of economic development along Germantown’s main strip. Nonetheless, an issue of using historical preservation as a means to develop Germantown’s economy lies in the question of gentrification.

According to Robin Datel:

The pattern of activism by neighborhood groups for preservation is tied to gentrification. Interest in architecture and history and willing to be a citizen participant in planning are largely a function of a person’s education and social class.¹⁴

By no means should this imply that lower class populations are not aware of or not participating in their communities; rather, it is more likely that areas with higher education and income levels would have the infrastructure in place to measure the community involvement of their members. Furthermore, other studies show that historical preservation does not necessarily lead to displacement of lower class populations, and can be fought through aid of different federal programs which are geared toward rehabilitating low income housing in historically designated areas.¹⁵ The question of gentrification and displacement is definitely important as it pertains to

¹³ Gerry Kaufman, Executive Director of Awbury Arboretum, personal communication, October 20, 2006.

¹⁴ Datel, Robin Elisabeth. “Preservation and Urban Orientation.” *Geographical Review*. Vol. 75, No. 2 (Apr., 1985) pp. 125-141, 137.

¹⁵ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. *Remember the Neighborhoods: Conserving Neighborhoods through Historic Preservation Techniques*. Urban Policy Group, 1981, 8.

community and economic development in Germantown. Nonetheless, due to constraints of time and space, this thesis will not focus on gentrification as a point of contention, but rather accept and understand it as a phenomenon that can occur in revitalization efforts if community and economic development plans do not approach it in a preventative way.

Historic Preservation

Although one might not necessarily associate historic preservation with the affluence of an area, it is generally thought of as a money maker for its surrounding community. According to Philip Brink, “historical/cultural visitors spent an average of \$615 per trip, compared to \$425 for all U.S. travelers . . . and are more likely to stay in a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast than in private homes.” Furthermore, Brink describes a “natural confluence of interests” in historic preservation. “Americans, as well as international visitors, have long shown interest in experiencing a nation’s, region’s and community’s unique heritage and charm. Likewise, communities are almost always looking for new sources of revenue, and preservationists are almost always searching for ways to sustain the historic places they treasure.”¹⁶ The economic benefits of historic preservation and heritage tourism have not necessarily been sold on Germantown. According to Linda Talbert, Executive Director of the Johnson House, the money generated from visitors to the Johnson House is practically negligible. Indeed, the majority of the money at the Johnson House comes from grants from the federal

¹⁶ Brink, Peter. “Heritage Tourism in the USA: Grassroots Efforts to Combine Preservation and Tourism.” *APT Bulletin*, Vol. 29, No. 3/4 (1998) pp. 59-63, 60.

government to preserve the site, not necessarily to promote interactions with the surrounding community.¹⁷

The preservation first focus of the majority of Germantown's historic sites, which may occur out of necessity more so than deliberately, impairs the sites' ability to bring tourism to the area and further isolates the sites from the neighborhood. Focusing efforts on interacting with the surrounding neighborhood could speak to Brink's "confluence of interests" and possibly create better business for the historic sites as well as surrounding businesses. In the same vein, Talbert describes that people who are interested in visiting Germantown's historical sites are directed to Chestnut Hill, an affluent neighborhood up Germantown Avenue, for lunch or for shopping. Clearly, there is a disconnect between the historical sites of Germantown and the surrounding community; historic sites attract people from the outside and instead of "welcoming" or advertising the neighborhood to these outsiders, they send them directly out of the neighborhood again.

While it is imperative to attract people to the area, there is also the threat of a "disneyfication" impact, where an area is solely focused on its tourism and loses its original identity. Developers and caretakers in Germantown would have to be careful in the way they presented the neighborhood and the history to others. With the risks of "disneyfication" in mind, tapping into the heritage tourism market in Germantown could also lead to new business creation along Germantown Avenue. The goal of Germantown's historic sites, then, is to use them to establish economic and community development initiatives that bring people in to the underused central commercial district and keep them in the neighborhood for longer periods of time.

¹⁷ Linda Talbert, Executive Director, Johnson House, personal communication, October 20, 2006.

Case Studies and General Questions

Three of Germantown's historic sites were visited as case studies to examine their community and economic development potential; Cliveden, site of the battle of Germantown, the Johnson House, an Underground Railroad site, and Awbury Arboretum, an arboretum with colonial houses which once served as the summer estates of the wealthy and influential Cope family. Using these three case studies, I plan to not only evaluate their potential for community and economic development but also gain general understanding of historic preservation in conjunction with community development initiatives. Among the questions that the evaluation will be based around are the following: What are the advantages of using historic sites in community and economic development efforts? What role does the national government play in the preservation of historic sites and the promotion of heritage tourism? What have been some past attempts at business and community organization? How have these initiatives either succeeded or failed, based on whether the efforts are community driven, systematically planned, and resulting in different forms of neighborhood revitalization? Again, we must understand the current dynamic between Germantown's historic sites and its residents. Are the historic sites generally known, recognized, respected or visited by Germantown residents? What is the general attitude of the community towards the sites, and of the site preservers and curators toward the Germantown community? Answers to these questions are key in the evaluation and understanding of how historic sites can be used for community and economic development projects.

Hypothesis and Argument

It is my hypothesis that the best way to develop Germantown through its historical resources is to organize partnerships between community groups and historical sites. Many of Germantown's historical sites are solely focused on the preservation of their specific site and not on the effects that they can have on their surroundings.¹⁸ By organizing community and business groups around the theme of historic preservation as an economic tool, Germantown residents could become more readily involved and invested in the redevelopment of their neighborhood. According to Robin Elisabeth Datel, "A fundamental underpinning for public historic-preservation programs is the notion that a landscape expresses and reinforces collective identity."¹⁹ Neighborhood revitalization would urge community members to take more pride in their neighborhood and care for it in a more cooperative, community oriented way. Currently, the landscape in Germantown reflects attitudes of overwhelming indifference towards its unique history, seen through the general deterioration of the majority of the landscape. Many Germantown residents may not even know that a site exists, or if they do, may not know its historical importance. Some sites are at busy intersections, and fall victim to the realities of urban life, such as graffiti or loiterers.²⁰ Because of this reality, many sites have taken a more defensive approach, only opening their doors to the public a few times a week or not advertising themselves in a clear way. It is my belief this disconnect can be repaired through the development of community and business organizations based around these historic sites.

¹⁸ Gerry Kaufman, personal communication.

¹⁹ Datel, 131.

²⁰ Linda Talbert personal communication

My main methodology in addressing the hypothesis will be through conducting interviews of directors and curators of historic sites in Germantown or of people who have been involved in the Germantown community for some time. Four interviews have been conducted, first with Linda Talbert, Executive Director of Johnson House, second with Gerry Kaufman, Executive Director of Awbury Arboretum, third with David Young, Executive Director at Cliveden, and last with Stephen Hague, Executive Director at Stenton. The goal of the interviews is to understand the relationship between the historic site and the community and to garner an understanding of specific strategies or tools used by the site or organization in regards to their involvement with the community. I hope to compare strategies that have succeeded, based on the aforementioned criteria, with strategies that have failed in order to draw conclusions about plans that could be executed successfully in Germantown. Other research methods include census and written material, primarily to provide background information on the history of Germantown as well as approaches to historical preservation.

The thesis is organized into three main sections of analysis. The first chapter will provide an historical overview of Germantown, emphasizing its transition from a suburb to a middle-lower income neighborhood, with a focus on Germantown's lower class and African American populations; their role historically as well as in Germantown's more recent history. How have they been involved in the Germantown community? What sorts of issues are especially pertinent to Germantown's African American and lower class communities? These questions will help inform the greater question of how to involve these populations in historical preservation and community organization efforts.

In the second chapter I will present an analysis of historic preservation literature and the effects that historic preservation can have on its surrounding community. I will outline the current public policies towards historic preservation and how these policies have economically affected preservation projects. I will describe the creation and guidelines of current revitalization programs, such as the Main Street program and Historical District Ordinance designations, to see if they could be a possibility for Germantown's historic sites. Furthermore, I plan on analyzing the role that African Americans play in historic preservation. Through these questions I hope to draw conclusions about the effects that historical preservation and economic development could have in Germantown.

In the third chapter I will examine historical preservation in Germantown; projects that have been undertaken in the past and projects that are presently underway. The problems, challenges, or benefits of the relationship between the greater Germantown community and the historic sites will be a major point of analysis. Also, the strategies of specific historic sites or community groups will be analyzed and compared to infer new, more effective strategies for business and community organization. Finally, through the primary analysis of what has succeeded or failed, how Germantown has historically responded as a neighborhood, and what unique economic capabilities historic preservation presents, I hope to propose ideas about how a more solid partnership can be formed between the historic sites and the community to jumpstart the redevelopment and revitalization of Germantown. Based around the criteria for success, I hope to bring to light the possible ways in which the Germantown community can change the current conditions of its historic sites and surrounding neighborhood.

I. Germantown History and Current Germantown Neighborhood

History

Germantown is a neighborhood in Northwest Philadelphia, bordered by Mt. Airy, East Falls, West Oak Lane, and North Philadelphia. While it was originally comprised of the entire suburban section in northwest Philadelphia, including the neighborhoods of Chestnut Hill and Mt Airy, the name Germantown now only pertains to the aforementioned neighborhood. Founded by Daniel Pastorius in 1683, Germantown was originally home to German immigrants, and Quaker and Mennonite populations.²¹ For about a century it remained a sparsely populated village and suburb, where in 1688 the first formal protest against slavery was organized by Pastorius and where the first American paper mill was constructed in 1690.²²

Germantown also plays a significant role in America's revolutionary and Colonial history, playing host to the battle of Germantown at the home of Benjamin Chew in 1777 (now Cliveden historic site), and also housing George Washington during a yellow fever epidemic in 1793. Many of the old estates of Germantown were once summer houses for wealthy Philadelphia merchants, speaking to Germantown's suburban origins.²³

Germantown Avenue, or Main Street as it was called, is a staple of life in Germantown both past and present. It was not only the main artery of Germantown itself, but was also one of the few roads into Center City and out of the Philadelphia area, to Reading and Bethlehem. The condition of Germantown Avenue, however, was so bad that "great country stores" along the avenue were developed because the trip into the city was so

²¹ Spencer 9.

²² Keyser 52.

²³ Keyser 110.

uncomfortable. The poor roads limited transportation between Germantown and Center City Philadelphia, making communication between the city and Germantown more difficult. It was not until the early 19th century that more modern roads were created.²⁴ In 1832 the railroad was constructed, enabling Germantown to be a more permanent residence for people working in Center City.

The Germantown area continued to be a residence of primarily well to do families throughout the 19th century. The book *Historic Germantown*, published in 1907 and written by David Spencer, speaks to the wealthy inner circles of Germantown, perhaps over emphasizing them in order to create a more luxurious image of Germantown. “All may form their own circle of society, and the uncrowned queens of Germantown as well as the royal sons within our borders may attain social heights not surpassed by the most exclusive or fastidious.” Spencer goes on to separate himself from this exclusive elite, stating “If these want to be thus exclusive they can be.”²⁵ Indeed, while race and class are sparsely mentioned in his book, Spencer does have one section, called “Homogenous Germantown” which ironically describes the diversity of the area that had not been mentioned earlier in his or Keyser’s histories of Germantown. “Here are the very wealthy and the very poor, the highly cultured and the rudely uncouth . . . white and black, as well as persons of nearly all nationalities.” Despite this racial and ethnic diversity, Spencer maintains that the homogeneity of Germantown is found in the common experience of all members, going to the same schools, religious institutions, and riding the same public transport.²⁶ This idea of peaceful coexistence may date back to Germantown’s Quaker roots, but Spencer’s eloquence and optimism also shows a

²⁴ Keyser 112.

²⁵ Spencer 110.

²⁶ Spencer 178.

negation of actual class and racial differences that were occurring in Germantown as well as in the rest of the country at that time.

Indeed, throughout the early periods of the 20th century, African Americans migrated to the Northeast due to the increased demand for labor during World War I. In Philadelphia, whose black population was just under 4 percent in the 1890s, the African American population had reached 5.5 percent by 1910 and 7.4 percent by 1920. Blacks settled in large numbers in North Philadelphia, where there were already a substantial number of African Americans and whose black population comprised 43 percent of the overall number of African Americans in Philadelphia. While new African American migrants competed with Italian, Jewish, and Polish immigrants for jobs and housing, blacks ultimately became the most residentially isolated group due to discrimination in housing policies experienced by African Americans at a much higher degree than other immigrant groups.²⁷ By 1940, African Americans had become segregated in pockets of the Germantown area closest to North Philadelphia, comprising between 10 and 50 percent of the total population in several pockets of Germantown.²⁸

The influx of African American populations ultimately led to changing demographics of many of Philadelphia's neighborhoods and poorer housing conditions. A study from Philadelphia Commission of Human Relations in 1953 showed that two thirds of Philadelphia's black population lived in substandard housing. Furthermore, African Americans were concentrated in 40 census tracts, of which 13,000 white families had moved out and into which 23,000 black families moved. These data suggest that

²⁷ Miller, Frederic. "The Black Migration to Philadelphia: A 1924 Profile." *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives*. Ed. Joe William Trotter, Jr. and Eric Ledell Smith. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997. 287-315. 289, 299.

²⁸ Countryman 54.

African Americans were living in more crowded and unsafe conditions. Indeed, housing occupied by African Americans during this time was more likely to be dilapidated and less likely to be owner occupied. At the same time, 96 percent of white population growth was occurring in Philadelphia's nearest suburbs.²⁹ While Philadelphia's black population increased from around 7 percent in 1920 to 33.6 percent in 1970, the overall population of the city remained stagnant.³⁰

The pattern of white flight to the suburbs and black population increase within the city limits also had its affect on Germantown. While violence had erupted to a higher degree in other neighborhoods within the city, Countryman reports one incident in Germantown in 1954 in which a black family moved to Slocum Street and received anonymous letters meant to threaten and intimidate the family so they would not move in. Ultimately, nothing came of these threats and the family was able to move in to Germantown.³¹ Nonetheless, the changing demographics and whites' responses illustrate the racial conflicts Germantown experienced in the mid 20th century. Indeed, in the sixties and seventies, the black population in Germantown rose from between 10 and 50 percent to between 51 and 90 percent in 15 pockets of the neighborhood as opposed to 3 or 4 pockets. Moreover, the overall population of the city continued to decrease.

The hyper segregation of many of Philadelphia's neighborhoods and the departure of wealthy and influential residents to the suburbs led to the steady decline and stagnation of the city as a whole. Nonetheless, African Americans throughout the city, and in Germantown specifically, were able to organize in order to combat discrimination and

²⁹ Countryman 53.

³⁰ Weiler, Conrad. *Philadelphia; Neighborhood, Authority, and the Urban Crisis*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974. 18.

³¹ Countryman 73.

other prejudices that contributed to the decline of their neighborhoods and their quality of life. An example of this type of organizing occurred in the 1972 on the campaign trail of David Richardson, an African American Germantown resident running for a seat in the state house. Richardson helped organize the Germantown Area Schools Project, which served as an alternate educational program to Germantown High, which had participated in the city wide teachers strike in 1971. Richardson spoke to racial unity and organization, and won the election in a landslide victory turning out black voters who otherwise would not have voted. “Voter turnout in the state house race was 15 points higher than in the rest of the city. . . ‘All the kids in Germantown,’ he told the *Philadelphia Daily News*, ‘were working for me. They made their parents vote.’”³² This example of neighborhood organization is meant to illustrate that underprivileged populations can indeed have large effects when there is effective leadership. While the 1970’s may have been a more volatile time in terms of black power movements and political instability, the black population in Germantown has not changed drastically from this time nor have the economic conditions of its residents.

Demographics

The current demography in Germantown speaks to its history of white flight and black migration. The 2000 census shows that Germantown is 80.8 percent black and 14.5 percent white. Only 21.8 percent of Germantown’s population has a bachelor’s degree or higher, while 73.9 have a high school diploma. The median income in 1999 per household was 27,436 dollars, with 24.5 percent of the population below the poverty level. About one third of housing in Germantown is renter occupied units, comprising

³² Countryman 319.

about 12,000 units, with the other two thirds being owner occupied. There are 1,440 households out of 22,290 with a “female householder, no husband present,” and of these female headed households, 30.3 are below the poverty level. This data is not as startling as some data in low income African American areas, where female headed households comprise a larger percentage within the total number occupied. The statistics on income, as well, are not as startling as one might think about Germantown. 17.7 percent of all families earn between 50,000 and 75,000 dollars per year, with the rest of the population being somewhat evenly distributed between 50,000 and less than 10,000 per year (See Figure 2.)³³

The somewhat paradoxical census data on Germantown is reinforced through the appearance of the neighborhood. Germantown Avenue, home to the majority of Germantown’s historic sites is also home to familiar symbols of “street” life. Beeper stores, check cashing agencies, fast food chains, and abandoned or boarded up buildings are a norm along Germantown Avenue and Chelton Avenue, the other main artery in Germantown running perpendicular to Germantown Avenue. As previously mentioned, these businesses are somewhat deceiving, for the whites and middle class African Americans that do reside in Germantown “tend to avoid the business district . . . or the stores simply do not attract them.” The people that are present on Germantown Avenue associate themselves with the “street element.” “Here people watch their backs and are more careful how they present themselves. It isn’t that they are worried every moment that somebody might violate them, but people are more aware of the others sharing space with them.” The youths of Germantown are similarly associated with a ghetto mentality; even if they themselves are not impoverished, “they have a need to show themselves as

³³ 2000 census.

being capable of dealing with the street.” In many ways, the image that Germantown projects does not necessarily paint an accurate picture, playing into racial and economic stereotypes that do not unanimously apply to the neighborhood.

II. Historic Preservation Movement

Historic Preservation in the 20th Century

The historic preservation movement has gradually been garnering attention since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, and has been evolving at an even faster pace throughout the eighties, nineties, and into the 21st Century. What was once thought of as the preservation of old, isolated homes of the wealthy has turned into a living entity connected to our modern, every day world. The world of historic preservation today is a multi leveled, diverse, and sometimes complicated partnership between the Federal government, local government, the private sector, and non profits. Funding for historic preservation initiatives is similarly complex; with financial aid coming from grants, loans, tax breaks, revolving funds, and easements, among other forms of assistance. Historic preservation is being used not only to preserve monuments, public buildings, and housing, but also to revitalize neighborhoods in urban and rural areas, as well as for the creation of museums and the promotion of tourism.³⁴

The importance and relevance of historic preservation and its impact on our society is not widely understood by the American public. Why historic preservation is an important component of our culture and community is a key issue that must be explained in order to proceed with our analysis. Robert E. Stipe provides several key points speaking to the relevance of historic preservation for our society, especially as it pertains to community and economic development. First, preservation is important because of its contribution to art and architectural values and inspirations, which in turn lead to a

³⁴ Cofresi, Lina and Rosetta Radtke, "Local Government Programs: Preservation Where it Counts." A *Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty First Century*. Ed. Robert E. Stipe. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Pres, 2003. 117-156. 117.

community's pride and identification with its landscape. Second, preservation can also occur in a "preventative" way, "because much of what replaces [historic buildings] is inhuman and grotesque." Lastly, and, according to Stipe, most importantly, preservation is important because of the social and human effects that it can potentially have on our communities, ultimately improving the quality of life through enhancing our built environment and conserving the beauty of our past.³⁵ In this sense, the potential effects of historical preservation span across many different aspects of modern society, and can be embraced in a way that promotes new growth as well as protects older staples of our communities.

The passage of National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 gave preservation efforts national attention and demonstrated the government's newfound commitment to historic preservation and the effects that historic sites can have on their surrounding community. "Before 1966, historic preservation was mainly understood in one-dimensional terms . . . set aside from modern life as an icon for study and appreciation." The progressive outlook of the government toward historic preservation reflected a desire to incorporate, not isolate, historic sites into the landscape of a community. A key reason for this assertion is the economic incentive and "confluence of interests" between the restoration of historic properties and the financial benefits of tourism. Further, historic preservation is also seen as a cultural asset to an area, adding diversity and improving the quality of life of residents. In this sense, the new legislation interpreted historic preservation not as mere preservation and admiration from afar, but rather as increasing

³⁵ Stipe, Robert E. "Prologue: Why Preserve?" *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty First Century*. Ed. Robert E. Stipe. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003. Xiii-xv. Xiii-xiv.

interaction between modern day life and historic sites through the incorporation of historic sites into the landscape and economic fabric of a community.³⁶

Preservation Policy

In order to achieve this goal, the National Historic Preservation Act incorporated different partnerships on national and local levels to monitor and promote historic preservation. The NHPA used the National Park Service, who had previously spearheaded historic preservation efforts, to provide knowledge and advice to give a broad background on historic preservation strategies. On a local level, State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) were established for every state, who direct and oversee historic preservation initiatives in their state as well as provide matching grants to historic sites to promote their growth and interests. The NHPA also established the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a cabinet level body of preservation experts as well as state, local, and federal representatives appointed by the President. Section 106 of the NHPA, amended most recently in 2004, grants the ACHP the right to provide expertise and opinions on policies being developed by the Federal Government in regards to historic preservation. Furthermore, section 106 requires that all Federal agencies take into account the effect of any policy on historic properties.³⁷

The most direct effect of the new federal policy was the establishment of the National Register of historic sites, which encompasses more than 900,000 sites today. Listing in the National Register allows historic sites to work most closely with SHPOs to receive funding through matching grants. Nonetheless, the grant program has limited

³⁶ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. "The National Historic Preservation Program." December 14, 2005. Available <<http://www.achp.gov/overview.html>> November 2006.

³⁷ <<http://www.achp.gov/overview.html>>

funds and is not always able to effectively influence the restoration and upkeep of all of sites on the National Register. In 1976 the Federal Tax Code was changed in favor of historic preservation to further assist historic preservation initiatives. Previously, tax incentives were given for the construction of new buildings, not for the reuse of old ones. Tax benefits were given to historic sites undergoing rehabilitation to “conserve the historic character of a building,” which encompasses the majority of historic preservation projects. The effects of this type of federal protection and recognition have been the rehabilitation and certification of 26,000 sites and the generation of 20 billion dollars in private investment. In general, the government’s active role in historic preservation implies that “evaluation of a resource’s historic significance can be made, and decisions concerning preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and even demolition can be carried out in a responsible manner.”³⁸

The government’s active participation and financial assistance in the restoration of historic sites enables historic preservationists to shift focus from the actual preservation of a site to the economic impact of that site. Speaking to Stipe’s last point, one of the most clear cut effects that historic preservation has on our quality of life is the positive economic impact that it can have on our communities. There are several different ways of measuring these economic effects, and historic preservation efforts are positively associated with practically all types of measurements. According to Randall Mason, “Economic impact is often expressed in statistics relating to several different aspects of historic preservation, such as rehabilitation work on buildings, heritage tourism, [and] production of housing.” Based on these categories, direct economic

³⁸ Fisher, Charles E. “Promoting the Preservation of Historic Buildings: Historic Preservation Policy in the United States. *APT Bulletin*. Vol. 29, No. 3/4 (1998.) 7-11. 7-8.

impacts are measured in job and business creation, total spending on historic activities, and investment in preservation efforts replacing or out bidding investment in another economic sector. In general economic terms, historic preservation has a large economic impact on individual states as well. For example, in New Jersey every million dollars spent on the preservation of non residential historic sites creates twice as many jobs compared to if that money were spent on the construction of new buildings.³⁹

Heritage Tourism

The impact of historic preservation is equally strong on the local level. One of the key and most profitable economic sectors of historic preservation is the heritage tourism sector. According to the National Trust's website, heritage tourism is defined as "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present." Moreover, "the core idea in cultural heritage tourism: save your heritage and culture, share it with visitors, and [for the local economy to]reap the economic benefits of tourism."⁴⁰ Statistics on historic tourists show that they spend more money on average in hotels and meals than a non historic tourist. The estimated number of historic tourists is 53.6 million people, or about one fourth of all U.S. adults.⁴¹ With such a large market for heritage tourism, a challenge of tourism is maintaining the authenticity of a place and the qualities that attracted tourists in the first place. Another challenge is the stress that it can put on local infrastructure; transportation and public services such as local police. If done on a smaller scale, however, the

³⁹ Mason, Randall. "Economics and Historic Preservation A Guide and Review of the Literature" The *Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program*. The Brookings Institution, 2005, 8-9.

⁴⁰ Cultural Heritage Tourism. "Getting Started: How to Succeed in Cultural Heritage Tourism." 2005. Available <<http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/howToGetStarted.htm>> November 2006.

⁴¹ Brink, 60.

overlapping benefits of heritage tourism reinforce one another. As an economic tool, tourism can diversify the local economy without drastically changing the local culture and landscape. Another aforementioned risk of heritage tourism is “disneyfication.” It is important to keep risks of tourism in mind when approaching it as a CED strategy; if put in place appropriately, however, heritage tourism is generally a successful strategy for community and economic development.⁴²

Federal Programs

Within the realm of heritage tourism and community development, there are specific strategies that are used to promote a community’s history while also revitalizing neighborhoods. One of these is the Main Street Program, a community driven strategy to revitalize business districts through historic preservation. The ideal behind the Main Street program is the empowerment of the local community to promote self reliance, which manifests itself in the rehabilitation of a traditional commercial district based on the local culture’s unique attributes, such as architecture.⁴³ Main Street programs have been successful in jump starting reinvestment into traditional business districts. The first three Main Street communities, in Galesburg, Illinois, Hot Springs, South Dakota, and Madison, Indiana increased downtown spending by 25 percent, decreased vacancy in the business district, and returned 11 dollars for every 1 dollar spent on administrative and improvement costs. A criticism of the Main Street program, however, is that the

⁴² <<http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/howToGetStarted.htm>>

⁴³ National Trust for Historic Preservation. “History of the National Trust Main Street Center.” 2006. Available < <http://www.mainstreet.org/content.aspx?page=3§ion=2>> November 2006.

emphasis on design turns business districts into “stagecraft,” creating a specific look to the Main Street initiatives that decrease the original authenticity of the area.⁴⁴

A more organically grown strategy of historic preservation is the creation of Historic District Ordinances by the local communities and bodies of government. While each ordinance is different for each historic district, the general idea behind the ordinance is the creation of local legislation which serves the purpose of protecting a district’s historical sites.⁴⁵ Each historic district has a review board which decides the design regulations and guidelines for renovations and upkeep of buildings, some of which are strict and others which are able to adapt to lower income businesses and residents when dealing with the often burdensome restrictions of the Ordinance. Historic District Ordinances have less overt effects than Main Street programs but are formed out of similar ideals, and enhance local economies by “promoting neighborhood stability, keeping middle class families from moving to the suburbs, creating neighborhood pride, and fostering local organization.”⁴⁶ In this sense, positive economic effects again have positive effects for neighborhoods and communities; the general organization and care taking of the economic sector provides a framework which enhances interactions between members of a community.

In conjunction with the organization and empowerment of communities, both Main Street and Historic District Designation are focused on maintaining an aesthetic of the landscape. In fact, historic sites aesthetically have an enormous effect on the meaning

⁴⁴ Cofresi and Radtke, 146.

⁴⁵ National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. “Working on the Past in Local Historic Districts.” 2000. Available <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/workingonthepast/intro+sectiona.htm> November 2006.

⁴⁶ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. *Remember the Neighborhoods: Conserving Neighborhoods through Historic Preservation Techniques*. 7.

and interpretation of our landscapes. They not only provide a cultural and historical context to a specific area, but they give an area a special significance and worth to residents and visitors alike. Despite different interpretations of historic sites and their cultural queues, their affect on a landscape reinforces the overall identity and community interest in an area.⁴⁷ The meaning of landscape, then, is inextricably linked to one's personal identity as well as cultural identity. Historic sites further legitimize this sense of meaning and character to landscapes. Besides their historic significance, historical landscapes also inform, even if on an unconscious level, our own perception of our modern lives; our landscape and our cultural values.⁴⁸ The development of identity through historical sites is important in the landscape of Germantown because of its diverse population, it is imperative to try and create a landscape which could speak to different racial and socio economic groups.

Another important lens through which to view historic preservation is the role that African Americans have played in this field. In many instances, African American concerns are ignored due to white dominance within the field of historic preservation. In his study on Washington, DC, Michael deHaven Newsom outlines the problems of historical preservation in predominantly African American areas. "Much historic preservation in the Georgetown style more accurately reflects desires to profit and to provide a new area for white residents near the city core than a concern for history." Newsom infers that if concerns for the social implications of revitalization efforts are real, than local African American residents should be involved and participate in historic

⁴⁷ Datel, 131.

⁴⁸ Lamme, Ary J. *America's Historic Landscapes: Community Power and the Preservation of Four National Historic Sites*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989. 19.

preservation projects.⁴⁹ The role of African Americans in historic preservation relates to Germantown because several sites involve African American history. The involvement of African Americans in the preservation of black history would help ensure that historic sites are not catering to community development initiatives geared toward a white demographic.

Another barrier to historic preservation is local politics of an area. According to Lina Cofresi and Rosetta Radtke, “without local political support, preservation efforts of every kind are impossible.”⁵⁰ We have seen the great effects that Federal Policy has had in jumpstarting the historical preservation movement. Why, then, should it not be the same on a local level? Many local governments claim that they do not have sufficient funding to undertake historical preservation initiatives. Cofresi and Radtke claim that “Local governments do have the money for such projects. . . [they] just don’t want to spend it on preservation.”⁵¹ In this sense, preservation is simply not a high priority of local governments and the lack of local political involvement also illustrates a lack of political savvy within the historical preservation community. More often than not, historical communities do not lobby politicians until after they have been elected. “In most cases, active participation in political campaigns and campaign contributions are more important than a noble cause pleaded at the eleventh hour.”⁵² In this sense, local historical preservation communities should support local politicians before an election to ensure their own success later.

⁴⁹ Newsom, Michael deHaven. “Blacks and Historic Preservation” *Law and Contemporary Problems*. Vol. 36, No. 3. (1971.) 423-431. 424.

⁵⁰ Cofresi and Radtke, 142.

⁵¹ Cofresi and Radtke, 143.

⁵² Cofresi and Radtke, 144.

While historic preservation policies have come to the forefront with new and preservation friendly public policy, there are still issues which face the preservation community especially in terms of strategies for community and economic development. In Germantown specifically, the incorporation of African American history as well as the support or lack thereof of the local government are key issues that the historic sites must address in order to avoid the previously outlined conflicts. While potential for economic development and heritage tourism in Germantown exists on a large scale, the development of “community” must provide a landscape that can speak to Germantown’s diverse population as well as to potential tourists.

III. Historical Preservation as a Vehicle for Community and Economic Development in Germantown

Historic Sites

The three case studies of historic sites in Germantown are Cliveden, Awbury Arboretum, and the Johnson House. Cliveden, located on Germantown Avenue, is a colonial house originally owned by Benjamin Chew, and is also the location of the Battle of Germantown. Awbury Arboretum in East Germantown was originally the location of the summer home of the Philadelphia merchant family the Copes, and now exists as private homes and an arboretum as well as functions as a non profit organization. The Johnson House, located at the intersection of Germantown Avenue and Washington Lane, is also a colonial house and was once a stop on the Underground Railroad. Each site differs in the way that it interacts with the community and how it approaches preservation.

Generally, the Johnson house is more concerned with its physical preservation and less with its relationship to the surrounding community. In fact, during my trip I was unable to discern the correct way into the Johnson house because the front door was closed and there was no sign about hours or the correct way to enter. During my interview with Linda Talbert, she explained that the door is usually kept closed because if it is left open there is a tendency for loitering, describing an encounter with a homeless person who interrupted a meeting when the door was left partially open. In this sense, the introspective nature and even the appearance of the Johnson House are not unfounded but rooted in realities of Germantown life. Unfortunately, relations between the community and its historic sites are marred in this way; the isolation of the historic sites can lead to

their neglect and disregard by the majority of neighborhood residents but at the same time is often a necessity for dealing with everyday life in the neighborhood.

Currently, Talbert explains that the Johnson House is primarily focused on preservation, having just received a matching grant for 250,000 dollars for the rehabilitation of their roof, stone pointing, and water conduction system. Talbert is also relatively new at the Johnson house and so has not been as involved in the Germantown community as directors of other sites. Despite its appearance and focus on preservation, the Johnson house is not completely cut off from the Germantown community, and its involvement in educational endeavors, such as History Hunters, illustrates this connection. History Hunters is a curriculum based program with local public schools where elementary school students visit four historic sites throughout their school year. Participating historic sites are Johnson house, Cliveden, Stenton, and Wyck.⁵³

Cliveden, by contrast, is very involved in community relations, hosting public events like Jazz concerts as well as private events such as weddings. The renting out of Cliveden for private use is a good way to connect it to the surrounding community that also has economic benefit for the historic site. Cliveden also hosts jazz concerts as well as Fourth of July celebrations. At the most recent Fourth of July, Frederick Douglas IV spoke and was met with a powerful response from the community. Executive Director David Young is also involved with local businesses, attempting to get their attention through the Business Improvement District and the 6300 Block Alliance, loose affiliates of businesses along Germantown Avenue. Young's point to these businesses is that historic sites, through tourism, can bring them more costumers. Young urges these businesses to keep their store fronts tidy and maintain a secure atmosphere within their

⁵³ Linda Talbert, personal communication.

establishment so that visitors feel safe and welcome. Even so, Cliveden is a National Trust site and is also able to focus on preservation, holding a reenactment of the Battle of Germantown once a year. In this sense, community involvement does not always have to come at the cost of preservation.

Awbury Arboretum is similarly involved with the greater Germantown community. While its case is a bit different because it is an actual arboretum and is a much larger property than either Johnson or Cliveden, it still has programs to reach out to the community. Like Cliveden, it is also available to rent out for weddings or other private parties. It also has its hand in education, with a summer nature program geared toward environmental education for children. Perhaps its most successful program is its job training program, which incorporates local youths as “student apprentices, 18 to 24 year old young adults, for careers in landscape management, horticulture and urban forestry through hands-on training as well as structured classroom sessions, regional workshops, conferences and field trips.” The individuals that come out of this program gain opportunities to work toward professional certification as horticulturists, landscape technicians, or arborists, and often times end up working for Awbury’s landscaping company.⁵⁴ Awbury’s status as an open park also allows it to cater to the surrounding community for dog walking or barbeques. In this sense, Awbury is perhaps the most connected historic site to the surrounding community due to its programs as well as its landscape.

⁵⁴ Awbury Arboretum. “Awbury Landscape Apprentice Program.” 2005. Available <www.awbury.org/jobtraining.htm> November 2006.

Challenges of Historic Preservation in Germantown

A primary challenge of historical preservation in Germantown is the sometimes incongruous relationship between many Germantown residents and the interests of historic preservation. Although Germantown has many historically relevant sites, they may not seem relevant to the surrounding community. As previously mentioned, historic preservation is usually associated with highly educated and generally wealthy populations. While there is some economic diversity in Germantown, the majority of residents are of lower to middle socio economic status and of African American descent. Another issue of historical preservation, then, relates to questions of race. While there are a few definitively African American historical sites, many of the other sites relate more to colonial and revolutionary histories, which do not resonate in an obvious way with African American populations. In this sense, one of the challenges is making a “white” history relevant to predominately African American populations.

Another challenge of historical preservation in Germantown is the general lack of unity not only between the historic sites and their surroundings, but between the historic sites themselves. In the past, the Germantown historic sites have competed for visitors instead of working together. Furthermore, many of the older generations of Germantown preservers have become somewhat jaded from past failures.⁵⁵ The past disappointments and unwillingness to collaborate lead historic sites to be isolated from each other and the surrounding community, more concerned with their own survival and less on the prosperity of Germantown. In conjunction with the turf defending of older generations, there is a general lack of training of younger generations.

⁵⁵ David Young, personal communication.

The good members die, move, have babies, lose interest, and so forth, and training has to be undertaken a second time. As a practical matter, older “trained” members tend to dominate the proceedings, and new members are intimidated, which often creates internal tensions among members who should be pulling together. If training is not a continuing effort, it may create as many problems as it solves.⁵⁶

In a sense, the nature of historical preservation is seen as more of a transient or stepping stone position than a permanent one, especially as it relates to community relations. In Germantown, the orientation is definitively preservation first, community relations second. If any community or economic development strategy is to be implemented effectively, historic sites must not only unite but also be able to shift their focus from preservation to community relations. Improved relationships with members of the community would undoubtedly enhance the economic conditions of many of the historic sites as well as the surrounding neighborhood.⁵⁷

Another reason that Germantown’s historic sites have been reluctant to collaborate is the simple logistical difficulty of trying to unite 12 separate sites. Furthermore, practically each site is part of a different government organization; such as the National Trust, Fairmount Park, or the National Society of Colonial Dames, among others. Because of the specific and unique characteristics of each blanket organization, each site goes about preservation in a different way and with different strategies, making it more difficult to collaborate with other sites which have different requirements or funding. Stephen Hague, executive director at the Stenton House, also explains that in the past there was no need or desire to collaborate, and only recently have the historic sites recognized the potential for the neighborhood that comes from their unification. In

⁵⁶ Cofresi and Radtke, 145.

⁵⁷ Gerry Kaufman, personal communication.

this sense, Germantown's historic sites have been isolated from one another due to logistic differences that led to individual goals and agendas independent of other sites.⁵⁸

Historic Germantown Preserved is perhaps the most recent collaboration between historic sites and community members. The mission statement of Historic Germantown Preserved is focused on "cooperation in providing knowledge and resources to help preserve Germantown's historic sites, interpret them to the public, and incorporate them into the life of the local community." Some of the goals of this organization are to organize a town hall meeting comprised of board members and staffs of all historic sites in Germantown as well as community representatives to create a forum for community feedback and input. Other goals include creating a Historic Germantown brand and collaboration between different historic sites to undertake joint funding applications.⁵⁹ Joint funding between the 12 historic sites in Germantown is also an effective way to save money, as each site will share certain services such as maintenance, insurance, and collections. There has also been talk of hiring tour guides knowledgeable on all of the historic sites that alternate locations throughout the week.⁶⁰ This program is still only about 5 years old and its affects and programs have not yet gotten underway. Nonetheless, it is a promising example of community and historical mobilization in Germantown.

In this sense, Germantown historical preservers and community leaders have learned from past failures that collaboration and community leadership are key facets to successful community and economic development initiatives. A 1998 Plan for

⁵⁸ Stephen Hague, Executive Director, Stenton. Personal communication, November 30 2006.

⁵⁹ Historic Germantown Preserved: Action Plan 2006-2007, obtained during communication with Gerry Kaufman, October 20, 2006.

⁶⁰ David Young, personal communication.

Germantown revitalization, while creatively planning to market the area, never was able to get off the ground. The plan called for a revitalization of Germantown Avenue, calling it “The Germantown Avenue Multicultural Heritage Corridor,” which divided historical and cultural sites into four sections; A “Green Gateway,” “High Street Center,” “Avenue Antiques,” and “Theatre Arts Gateway.”⁶¹ This kind of creative marketing called for unification and collaboration between historic sites but ultimately failed due to “turf defending” of the different historic sites as well as a lack of funding.⁶² Furthermore, the plan was a relatively large plan and required lots of energy, support, and commitment from planners and developers. Combined with a lack of funding and unity, there was also simply not a large enough driving force behind the plan in order to truly see it through.⁶³

Furthermore, local political activity has also impeded the unification of Germantown’s historic sites. Previous local Germantown politicians were not open to new business development. The stubbornness of local politicians goes along with that of older generations of historic preservers in Germantown. Certainly, frustration and loss of hope are justifiable in a neighborhood like Germantown, where failed attempts at community development have been the norm. Nonetheless, the mental barrier faced by many Germantown community members hinders progress in such a way that younger generations are not able to get their ideas off the ground. Currently, Germantown politicians have been more supportive of historical preservation efforts as well as

⁶¹ 1998 Plan for Germantown, obtained during communication with David Young, October 27 2006.

⁶² David Young, personal communication.

⁶³ Stephen Hague, personal communication

community unification strategies, supporting funding for historical preservation projects.⁶⁴

In conjunction with political support, Germantown also lacks a stable Community Development Corporation to spearhead community development in the area. Nearby neighborhoods Mount Airy as well as West Oak Lane have been very successful in new business creation as well as the creation of community organizations due to their very active CDC's and political support. In West Oak Lane, the Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation along with local politician Dwight Evans have been able to affect change in many areas:⁶⁵ some examples are community jazz concerts, new business creation on Ogontz Avenue, and a current project called the Northwest Greening Initiative, where OARC received \$250,000 to "plant and maintain hundreds of trees in commercial and residential areas throughout Northwest Philadelphia."⁶⁶ Although OARC is not necessarily focused on historic preservation projects, it illustrates the types of programs and affects that local CDCs are able to have on their communities, especially when combined with local political power.

Thus far in Germantown, there have been no clear cut successes that fit the three criteria for successful community development strategies. Nonetheless, there are promising examples of community collaboration with the historic sites as well as learning from mistakes of the past. Historic Germantown Preserved is the best example of Germantown community members and historic sites learning from prior mistakes; attempting to organize from a community driven perspective and to create partnerships

⁶⁴ Gerry Kaufman, personal communication.

⁶⁵ Stephen Hague, personal communication

⁶⁶ Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation. "Projects in Progress." No date. Available <<http://www.ogontzave.org/projects.shtml>> December 2006.

between the historic sites. The one aspect that it does not focus on, however, is the aesthetic aspect of neighborhood beautification. This criterion is crucial because of its connection with tourism and perceptions of safety, especially to visitors from outside of Germantown. Because of Germantown's tarnished image and connotations as a "bad" neighborhood, it is important to aesthetically combat this image through maintaining storefronts and resisting vandalism in historic sites.

In this sense, the joining together of the historic sites as a way to promote community and economic development is still a relatively young idea in Germantown, and has the potential to be developed further. While there are many obstacles facing community development in Germantown, there is also great potential and resources in the area. Local political support and a more active CDC, as well as increased unification of the historic sites could lead to the formation of new community projects and could ultimately be able to affect change in Germantown.

Conclusion

The word often used to describe Germantown is “potential.” Certainly, Germantown’s historic sites are one of its strongest features, and theoretically provide a framework for economic development. Nonetheless, Germantown’s historic sites have been unable to affect change on a larger scale for the community. Some of the reasons for their inability to affect change are their general lack of unity and independent, introspective outlooks. Furthermore, the lack of local political and CDC support in Germantown reinforce the autonomous outlook of the sites; before Historic Germantown Preserved there simply was no organized framework that fostered collective work and progress among the historic sites.

Besides Historic Germantown Preserved, there are few examples of collaboration between Germantown’s historic sites. The educationally focused History Hunters program has also been key in promoting teamwork between the sites, although it is implemented on a smaller scale using only four of Germantown’s twelve historic sites. Other programs executed by Cliveden and Awbury Arboretum have been successful in terms of job creation or community outreach, but simply have not been done on a large enough scale to make a difference in the overall community and economic development of Germantown. The self sufficient attitudes of many of the historic sites imply a focus on the preservation of their buildings and their status as a historic site, which detracts from their ability to involve themselves in the community. Another barrier to community

development, then, is the preservation first survival tactic employed by many of Germantown's historic sites.⁶⁷

Ironically enough, the many governmental structures in place to protect historic sites are not being used effectively in Germantown. The possibility of implementing a Main Street program along Germantown Avenue or creating a Historic District Ordinance could involve community members as well as work to change Germantown's tarnished image. In fact, there has been talk within Germantown's historic preservation community of using a Main Street program along Germantown Avenue, but the effects of this are yet to be seen.⁶⁸ It will be interesting to see whether a Main Street plan could be realized despite the history in Germantown of disorganization and incomplete plans.

Besides combating disorganization, another necessary building block of community development is the involvement of community members in the process. A promising feature of the Historic Germantown Preserved plan is the creation of a town hall meeting, which inherently involves community members. Since Germantown is a primarily African American neighborhood, a town hall meeting would more than likely create partnerships between the historic sites and local residents, as well as increase opportunities to incorporate African American history and culture into the historic sites. Another positive goal of Historic Germantown preserved is the idea of joint services for each site, such as tour guides. Joint services would not only save money for the sites, but create partnerships and foster organization among the twelve sites, increasing their potential and capability of attracting tourists and improving relations with the community.

⁶⁷ Gerry Kaufman, personal communication.

⁶⁸ Stephen Hague, personal communication

While there are many exciting changes currently happening with Germantown's historic preservation community, this paper has neglected certain threats that community development and historic preservation pose to Germantown. The first and most obvious threat of community and economic development initiatives is gentrification. While this paper did not go into depth about gentrification and its implications, it is nevertheless an important issue facing Germantown. Housing prices have been increasing in Germantown, which could lead to the displacement of many of Germantown's residents. It is debated whether or not increased housing stock is necessarily a bad thing for a neighborhood; certainly, it can displace poorer residents which is generally seen as a negative. Conversely, increased wealth in an area does benefit those residents that are able to stay, especially as their property values rise. Furthermore, new business and job creation keep people in the neighborhood and would undoubtedly increase tourism to Germantown. Gentrification is certainly a very heated topic and there are many arguments as to its implications; nonetheless it is beginning to occur in Germantown, and how it affects the neighborhood and the historic sites is yet to be seen.

Another potential threat touched on by this paper is the threat of "disneyfication," which comes from increased tourism to an area. If Germantown undergoes gentrification on a large scale, the threat of "inauthenticity" of landscape is certainly applicable. Furthermore, the idea of a Main Street program also poses questions about authentic versus inauthentic, and would have to be implemented in such a way that community members have a hand in the decision making process. These issues are certainly relevant as they pertain to the conditions in Germantown, but, again, will come into play more in the future of Germantown than they have in Germantown's past. Depending on the

degree and type of gentrification that occurs in Germantown, historic preservationists and community members may or may not have to concern themselves with disneyfication or ideas of inauthenticity.

One of the more difficult aspects of this paper was that as research was being conducted on Germantown, new plans were also being implemented and created. While this provides a very exciting platform of research, it also impedes the ability to analyze the effects of the new plans, which are yet to occur. In this sense, the uncertain future of Germantown and its historic sites thwarts the possibility of drawing concrete conclusions. It is my belief that the creation of Historic Germantown Preserved shows that the historic preservation community is committed to improving relations with the community, which is certainly a positive thing. Nonetheless, the historic sites cannot do everything on their own, and local political support as well as the stable presence and input of a local CDC would help this effort tremendously. Hopefully, Historic Germantown Preserved will be able to affect enough change to inspire more political and CDC support. The word potential has for too long described the character of Germantown and its historic sites, and we can only wait and see if this potential can be transformed into a reality for the Germantown community and its remarkable historic resources.

Appendix

Figure 1: Racial Composition by Percent Population in Germantown, 2000 Census

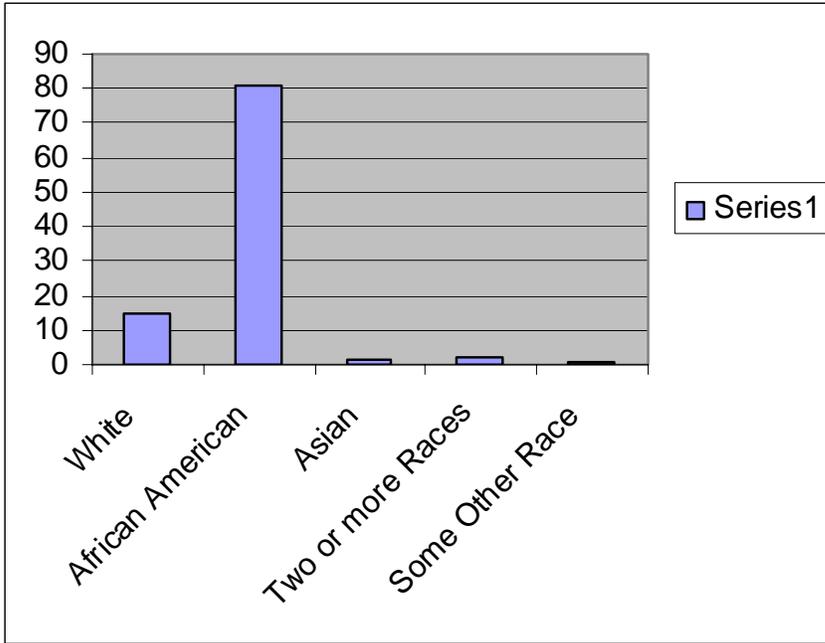
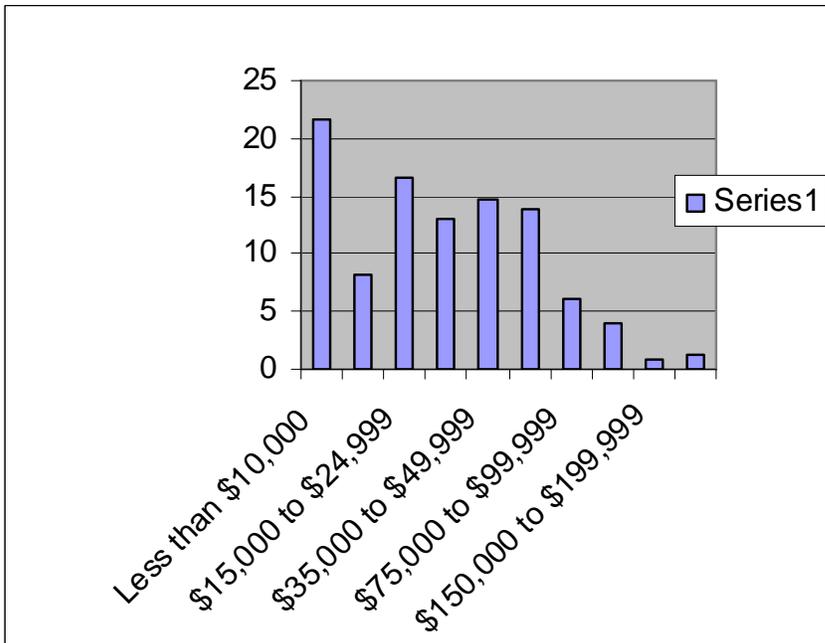


Figure 2: Household income by Percent Population in Germantown, 2000 Census



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