

# Summary of Research for Hopeprint on Northside Neighborhood History

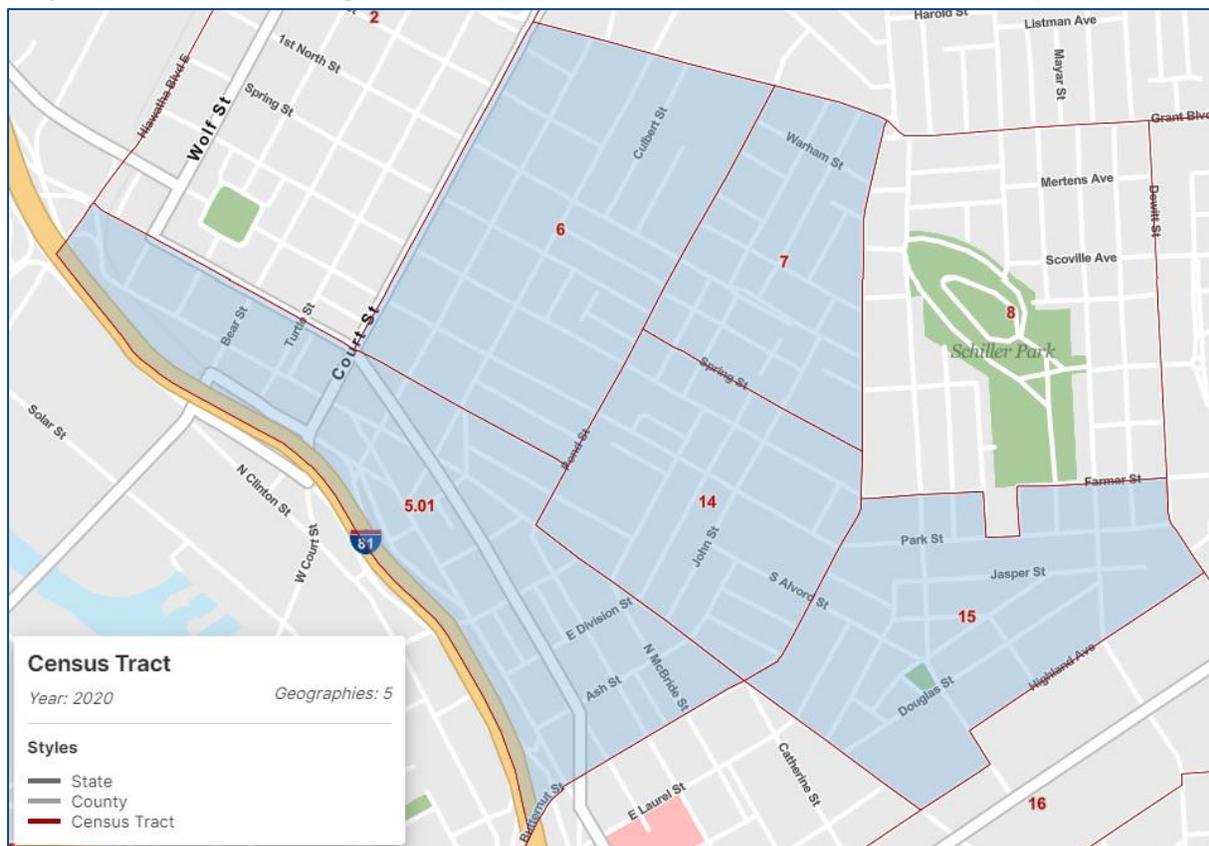
This document summarizes United States Census Bureau data on populations living in and around Hopeprint’s microneighborhood of Syracuse over time. This report includes information about:

- Residents identified as “foreign born”;
- Continents of origin among “foreign born” residents; and
- Racial demographics.

In addition, it includes information about some related socioeconomic characteristics of the neighborhood based on review of other sources such as redlining maps.

The area of interest, referred to as “the Northside neighborhood” in this report, was defined specifically as 2020 Census Tracts 5.01, 6, 7, 14, and 15 in Onondaga County, NY. When Census Tract level data were unavailable, other sources were used to supplement this research.

## Map of the Northside Neighborhood (2020 Census Tracts 5.01, 6, 7, 14, and 15)<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Map rendered from the U.S. Census Bureau’s <https://data.census.gov/map> tool

## Summary

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The first long-term settlers in the Northside neighborhood of Syracuse were mostly German immigrants who built their homes beginning in the mid-1800s. Italian immigrants began arriving after 1883 and grew to be the dominant group in the neighborhood around North Salina Street by the 1930s. Between 1930 and 1980 nearly all residents of the Northside neighborhood were counted by the Census as White and of European ancestry, and the percent of foreign born residents decreased. The housing stock declined, and the population slowly shrunk from over 21,000 people in 1930 to about 12,000 people in 2000. The neighborhood's demographics began to change in the 1980s as Syracuse welcomed refugees from Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. Between 1990 and 2020 the percent of foreign born neighborhood residents grew from 9% to 36%. During this time most of this population came from Asian and African countries, which changed the racial composition of the neighborhood significantly. In 2020, approximately 71% of residents identified as Black, Asian, Hispanic, multiple races, or some other race.

## Early records through the 1920s

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The Village of Syracuse was incorporated in 1825 and grew into a city over the following decades. The Census Bureau did not collect data in a way that allows us to determine Northside neighborhood-level statistics at this time, and would not do so until 1930. However, numerous historical records document Germans settling in the Northside neighborhood of Syracuse throughout the 1800s.<sup>2</sup> One source claims that in 1840 there were approximately 4,000 residents in Syracuse, and about 1,000 of them were estimated to be German.<sup>3</sup>

The 1880 Census shows that many Northside neighborhood residents reported their Place of Birth as the German states of Baden, Bavaria, or Prussia.<sup>4</sup> It appears that all Northside residents were identified in Census records as "White." Occupations varied, with most women listed as housekeepers and men listed as laborers, carpenters, tailors, etc. Many men were likely employed in Syracuse's large salt industry.

Syracuse experienced rapid growth during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Between 1850 and 1920, the city's population grew from 22,000 to 172,000 people.<sup>5</sup> Census data show that the city's growth between 1880 and 1920 was primarily due to immigrants from Germany,

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<sup>2</sup> Sources include City Directories and published Census records from 1870-1920 Censuses.

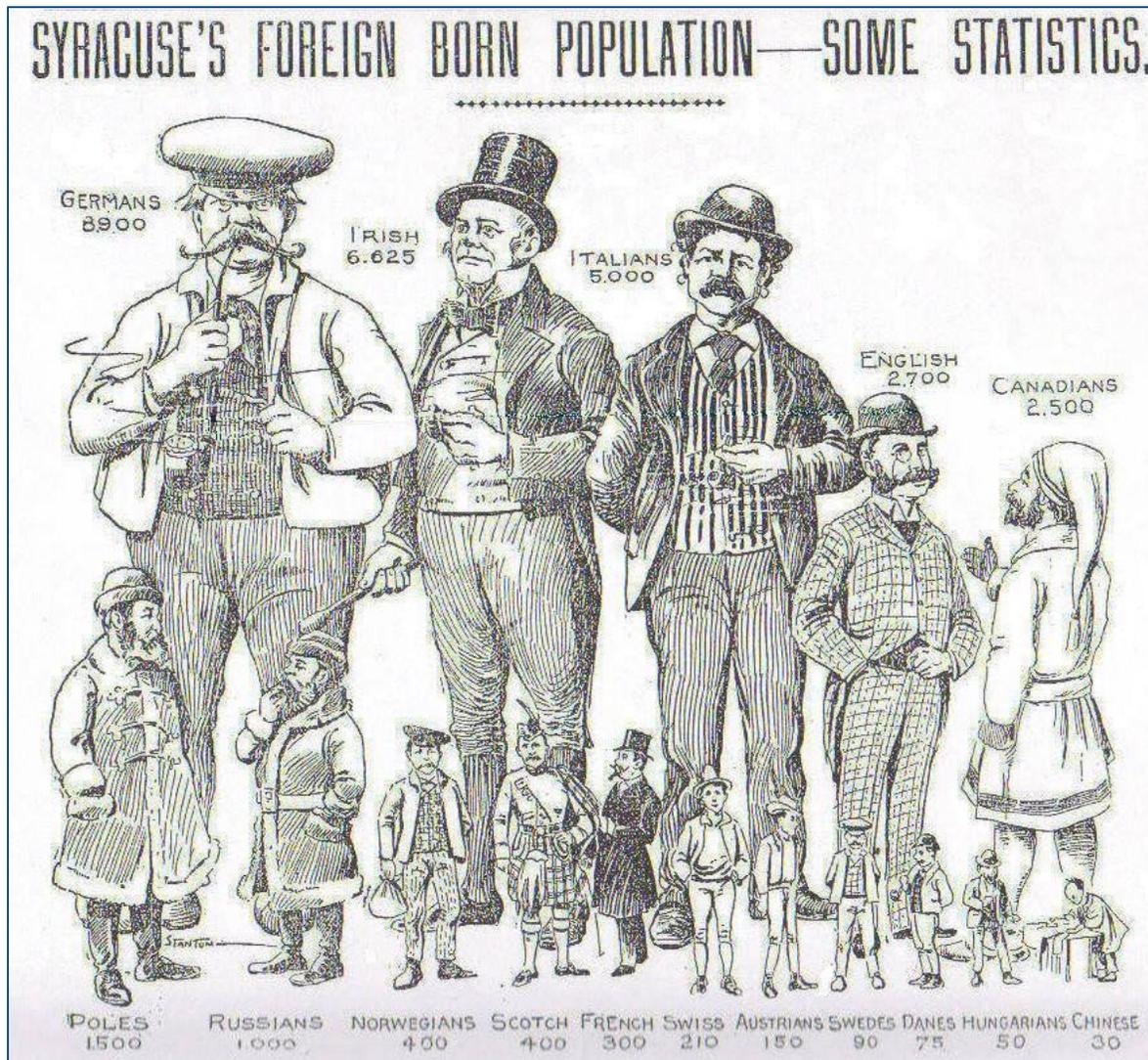
<sup>3</sup> Per translation of an 1897 book published in German called "History of the German People in Syracuse and Onondaga County with short biographies of officials and prominent citizens," which is available through the Onondaga County Public Library's Historic and Genealogy Collection (non-circulating, in the Central Library). The translator, Michelle Stone, created a [website summarizing the history of Germans in Syracuse](#) (date unknown).

<sup>4</sup> 1880 Census, accessed through Ancestry.com

<sup>5</sup> From the Patterns of Government book at <https://www.focussyracuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2021-Patterns-of-Government-Final-1.pdf>

Italy, and Ireland.<sup>6</sup> However, residents were also arriving from England, Canada, Poland, Russia, and other European countries. A newspaper cartoon from 1897 uses stereotypes of each ethnic group to show immigration statistics from this time.<sup>7</sup> The source speaks to the diversity of European nationalities represented among the city's newcomers, and notably includes 30 Chinese immigrants among Syracuse's foreign born population.

**Cartoon published in the Syracuse Sunday Herald, 1897**



Although the Census data do not allow us to easily gauge exactly who lived within the Northside neighborhood boundaries at this time, there is ample evidence that the Germans and Italians were the predominant ethnic groups living on the Northside. Both ethnic groups had their own social clubs and institutions in the neighborhood.

<sup>6</sup> Per volume called "Foreign residents of Syracuse" in Onondaga County Public Library's Historic and Genealogy Collection

<sup>7</sup> Loos, J. (3/19/1897). Syracuse Sunday Herald, available at <https://www.wishcny.org/italian-and-syracuse>.

One map of Syracuse from 1918 (pictured below) shows most of the Northside neighborhood as populated by people of “German Descent” and “artisans, tradesman and unskilled labor, mill workers” (indicated by the color yellow in the image pictured below).<sup>8</sup> The blocks between Court St. and Kirkpatrick St. (running east of N. Salina St.) are marked by the color green, indicating they were home to “professional men, merchants, clerks, etc.” The map was not the product of rigorous data collection and grossly oversimplifies the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the neighborhood; however, it is relevant as a precursor to the redlining maps of the 1930s, which helped entrench segregation in Syracuse.

### Map of City of Syracuse, 1918<sup>8</sup>



The area of the Northside neighborhood closest to N. Salina St. and the present-day location of I-81 was labeled “Italian.” The color red identified land used for commercial and manufacturing purposes. Italians were considered “free white persons,” but often experienced discrimination as a new immigrant group in the U.S.<sup>9</sup> Their low socioeconomic status relative to the older immigrant groups is likely related to the decision to include their homes in the redlined areas of Syracuse a few decades later.

<sup>8</sup> Mulcahy, M. (2021, February 22). [The Map: Segregated Syracuse... still.](#)

<sup>9</sup> Staples, B. (2019, October 12). [How Italians became ‘White’.](#) New York Times.

## 1930 – 2020

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Beginning in 1930, Census Tract level data allows us to describe the race and background of Northside neighborhood residents with more precision. However, it is important to note some of the limitations to the data:

- Race and ethnicity categories have changed over time, and a full exploration of these changes is beyond the scope of this report.<sup>1011</sup>
- In 1930, the local Census Bureau reports only include two categories to describe people’s race (“White” and “Negro”), so many people would be categorized differently if the current race/ethnicity categories were used.
- There is evidence that Black people were often undercounted in the decennial censuses, at least until 1940.<sup>12</sup>
- Census Tract geographies appear to be stable beginning in 1930, but they may have shifted somewhat over time.
- For many years decennial census data were collected by people (“enumerators”) who judged a person’s race/ethnicity by appearance, rather than asking people to self-report their race/ethnicity. Statistics, including the Census Tract data reports, were compiled by humans, not computers. Furthermore, the neighborhood-level statistics in this report were calculated after compiling data from multiple Census Tracts, which required some manual data entry from Census Bureau reports. Thus, there are many ways that human error may impact the accuracy of the data.

With those disclaimers, the following sections describe data for the neighborhood by decade.

### **1930**

In 1930, there were approximately 21,192 residents in the Northside neighborhood. Of these, nearly everyone’s race was documented as “White” in the 1930 Census; only 5 residents were listed as “Negro.”<sup>13</sup> Approximately 26% of residents identified as “foreign born White” and the vast majority hailed from European countries. Germans and Italians were the largest ethnicities represented, but immigrants also hailed from England, Scotland, Ireland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Canada, and other countries. The map on the following page shows that many Italian families were living in the blocks surrounding North Salina St.

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<sup>10</sup> Lai, K.K. R. & Medina, J. (10/16/2023). [An American puzzle: Fitting race into a box](#). *New York Times*.

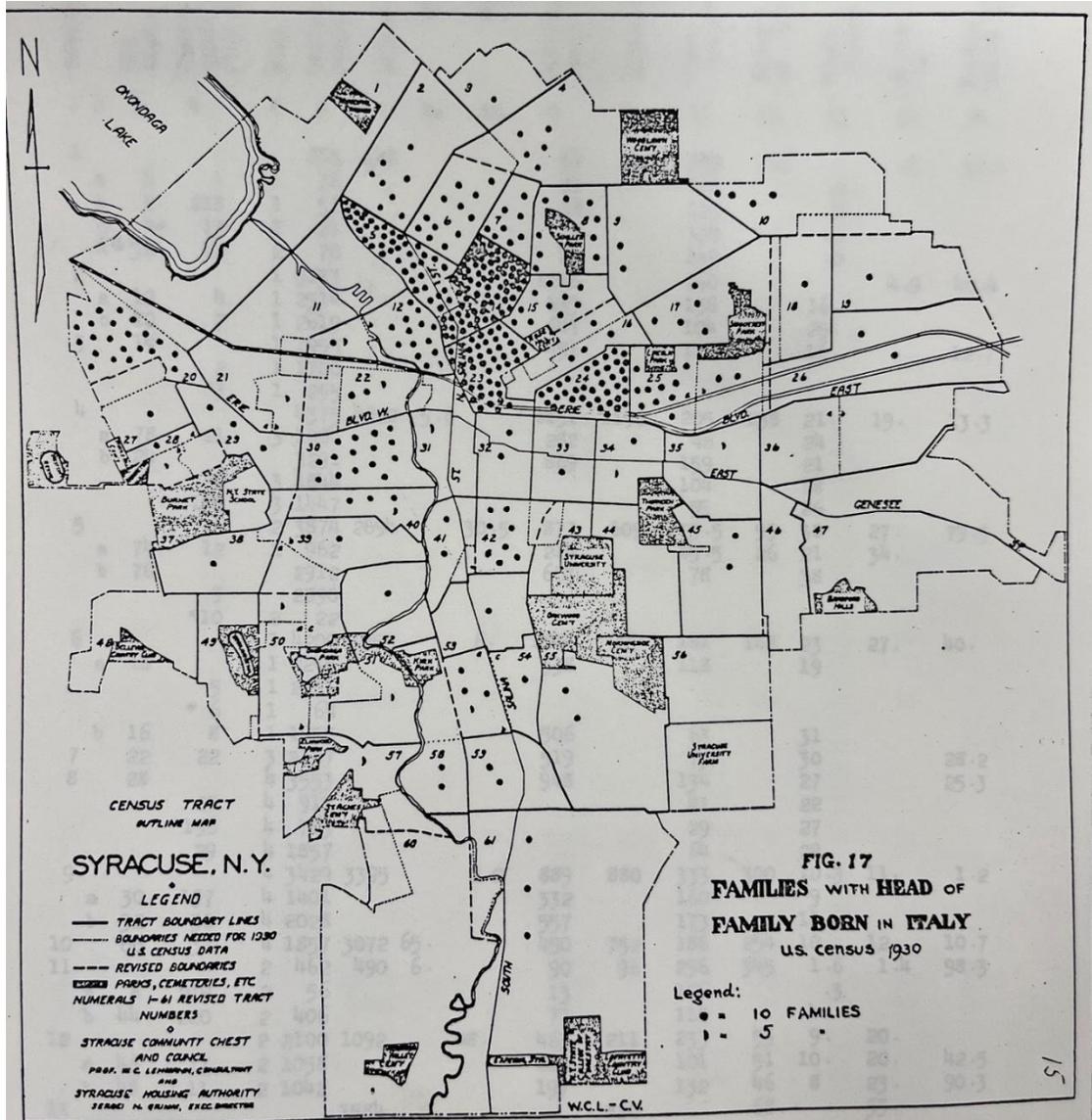
<sup>11</sup> Gaffney, K. (12/17/2018). [Confronting the U.S. Census as a weapon of white supremacy](#). *Public Seminar*.

<sup>12</sup> Bouk, D. (2022). Democracy’s data: The hidden stories in the U.S. Census and how to read them. *MCD*.

<sup>13</sup> Lehmann, W.C. (1937). Syracuse population characteristics by Census Tracts: 1930. Published by the Fact Finding Committee of the Syracuse Community Chest and Council, accessed through the Onondaga County Public Library. Statistics compiled by combining data from Census Tracts 5, 6, 7, 14, and 15 (previous equivalents to the current tracts).

The 1930 Census classified “Native White” people into two subcategories – those with “foreign or mixed parents” and those with “native parents.” Analysis shows that about 47% of all residents in the Northside neighborhood were “Native White with foreign or mixed parents.” When considering this along with the 26% percent of residents who were foreign born, we can estimate that nearly 3 in 4 Northside neighborhood residents (72%) were either immigrants or children of immigrants in 1930.

**Map showing where Italians were living in Syracuse in 1930.<sup>14</sup>**



The 1930s was the time of the Great Depression, when many people found themselves newly unemployed and unable to pay their rent or mortgages. In an attempt to slow foreclosures, the federal government enacted new housing legislation and formed the Home Owners Loan

<sup>14</sup> Lehmann, W.C. (1937). Syracuse population characteristics by Census Tracts: 1930. Published by the Fact Finding Committee of the Syracuse Community Chest and Council, accessed through the Onondaga County Public Library.

Corporation (HOLC) to promote homeownership. However, the HOLC infamously created redlining maps which ranked residential housing by its quality, designating the worst-quality homes as “hazardous” and therefore ineligible for housing loans. Redlining maps helped condemn racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods to years of disinvestment. In areas where people could not get assistance to buy or refinance homes, property values declined and people with resources had no incentive to stay and gradually moved away.<sup>15</sup>

**1937 Map of Northside neighborhood by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC)<sup>16</sup>**



Although the blocks north of Kirkpatrick St. are categorized as “still desirable”, much of the neighborhood is marked as “definitely declining” or “hazardous.” The yellow area pictured above (labeled as “C3”) is described by the HOLC as having housing that is “spotty in character.”

**Image from HOLC document describing the yellow area on Syracuse’s Northside (C3)<sup>17</sup>**

An area of rolling land almost solidly built and known as the old north side. Housing is old and obsolete built on small lots and generally spotty in character. Population is shifting from German to Italian. Part of the area adjoins Schiller Park. Convenient to good shopping facilities, schools, churches and transportation.

<sup>15</sup> CNY Fair Housing. (2020). [Zoning and segregation in Syracuse, NY.](#)

<sup>16</sup> Screenshot of [Syracuse’s Northside neighborhood in the 1937 Residential Security Map by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation](#), retrieved from the University of Richmond’s site called Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America.

<sup>17</sup> Screenshot of [Document describing the C3 area on the 1937 Residential Security Map by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation](#), retrieved from the University of Richmond’s site called Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America.

The red area in the map (labeled as “D1”) extends south alongside N. Salina St. and then east along Burnet Ave. The entire “D1” area is described by the HOLC as being 100% occupied by foreign Italian laborers and factory workers considered “less desirables” (see images below).

**Images from HOLC document describing the redlined area on Syracuse’s Northside (D1)<sup>18</sup>**

AREA DESCRIPTION			
Security Map of <u>Syracuse, N.Y.</u>			
1. POPULATION:	a. Increasing	Decreasing	Static Yes
	b. Class and Occupation Laborers and factory workers		
	c. Foreign Families 100 %	Nationalities Italian	d. Negro 0 %
	e. Shifting or Infiltration Less desirables		

8. DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AREA: A section of mixed one and two-family houses with a scattered few multiple units. Proximity to and further encroachment of industry and business is adding to the blight in the area except that it supplies convenient employment sources. Population of less desirable character continues to filter in and accentuate the downward trend. Some vandalism is apparent. Area is a poor one and warrants only a fourth class rating.

As shown above, the HOLC also described the redlined Northside area as “poor” and experiencing “some vandalism.” Proximity to industry was seen as problematic during this time, especially when it entailed proximity to Black or low-income workers, which is why Syracuse’s first zoning code (adopted in the 1920s) sought to separate residential and industrial areas. A full discussion of how racism influenced neighborhood development is beyond the scope of this report, but the information on redlining and zoning is included herein because both factors contributed to the lack of growth and new housing development in the Northside neighborhood in subsequent decades.<sup>19</sup>

**1940 – 1970**

In the 1940 decennial census, 100% of the neighborhood’s 19,813 residents were classified as “White.”<sup>20</sup> Approximately 22% of residents were counted as “Foreign born White,” but their countries of origin were not specified in the Census Tract report. There is no data to indicate if

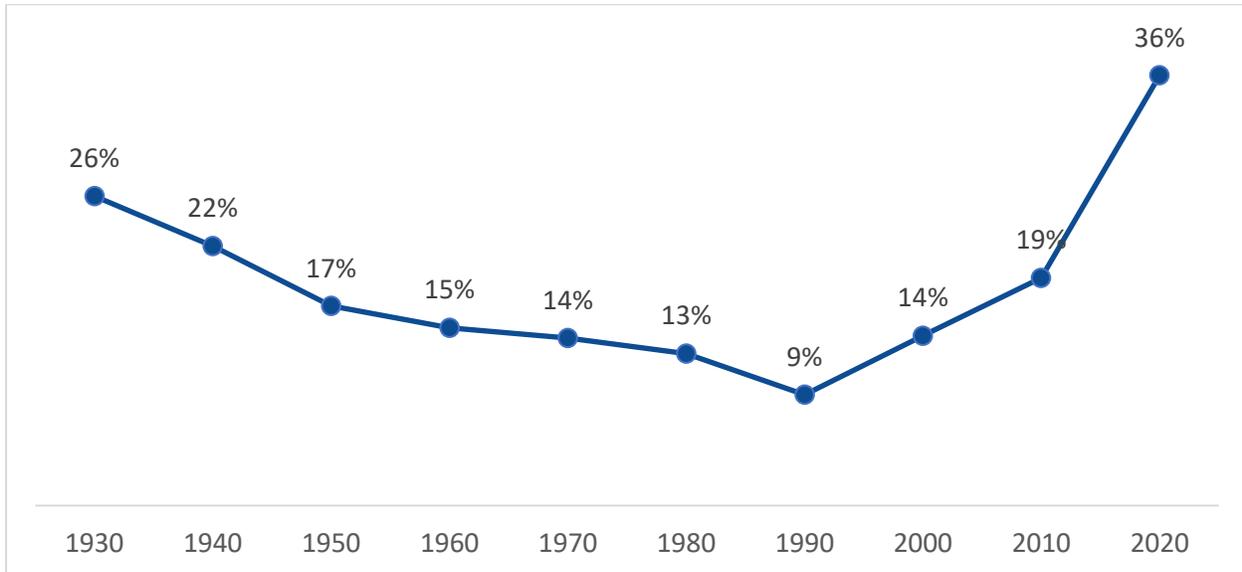
<sup>18</sup> Screenshots of [Document describing the D1 area on the 1937 Residential Security Map by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation](#), retrieved from the University of Richmond’s site called Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America.

<sup>19</sup> See CNY Fair Housing. (2020). [Zoning and segregation in Syracuse, NY](#) for more information.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1942). Population and housing statistics for Census Tracts: Syracuse, NY. Accessed through the Onondaga County Public Library. Statistics compiled by combining data from Census Tracts 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, and 15.

these residents were newly arrived in Syracuse; it is likely that many of these “foreign born White” residents are the same people who arrived during the immigration waves in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Figure 1 below shows the trend over time. The decline in foreign born residents between 1930 and 1990 was likely impacted by the 1924 passage of a restrictive immigration law that imposed quotas on immigrants and banned Asian immigrants altogether.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 1. Percent of Northside neighborhood residents who were foreign born, 1930-2020<sup>22</sup>**



In 1950, nearly 100% of the neighborhood’s 18,748 residents were classified as “White”; only 4 people were counted as “Nonwhite” residents (3 counted as “Negro” and 1 as “Other races”).<sup>23</sup> About 17% (3,169 people) were counted as “foreign born White.” Of these 3,169 residents, 2,298 (72.5%) were from Italy, 503 (15.9%) were from Germany, and 11.6% were from other countries. In terms of occupations, many men reported that they were “machine operators” and it is likely that many worked for the large manufacturing companies (e.g., General Electric, Carrier Corporation).

In the 1960s, the Northside neighborhood had approximately 17,103 residents.<sup>24</sup> Nearly all (99.7%) were identified as “White,” 2 were listed as “Negro,” and 52 are listed as “Other

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2023). [The Immigration Act of 1924 \(The Johnson-Reed Act\)](#).

<sup>22</sup> Summary of statistics for 2020 Census Tracts 5.01, 6, 7, 14, 15 and their previous equivalents, compiled from decennial censuses between 1930 and 2000 and American Community Survey 5-year estimates from 2010 and 2020.

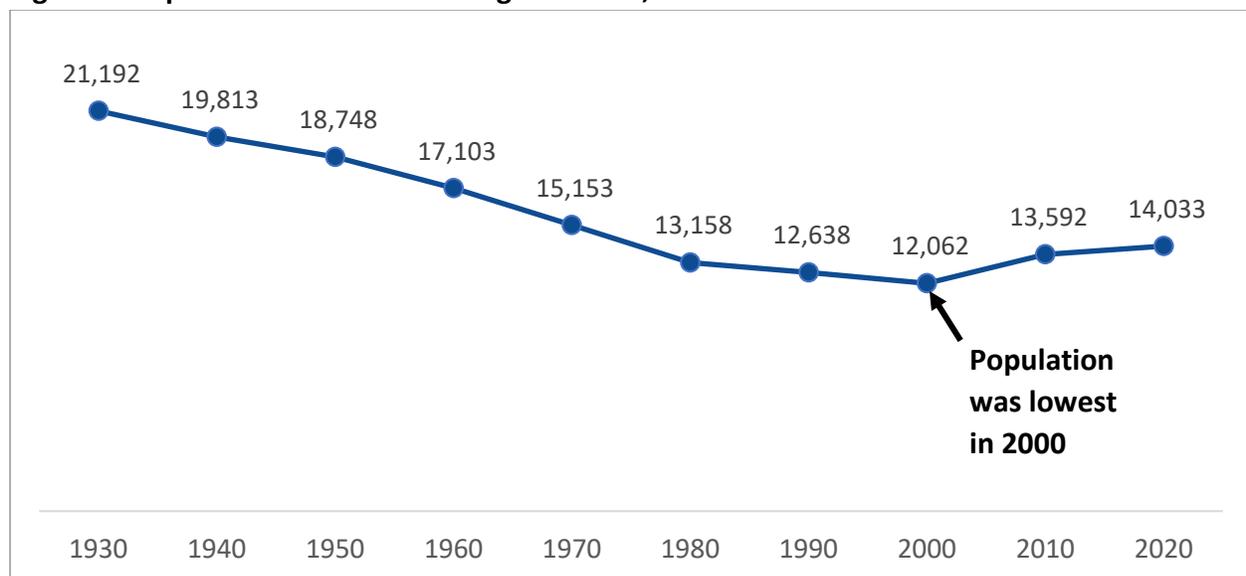
<sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1952). 1950 United States Census of Population: Syracuse, N.Y. Census Tracts. Accessed through the Onondaga County Public Library. Statistics compiled by combining data from Census Tracts 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, and 15.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1962). U.S. Censuses of Population and Housing: 1960: Census Tracts: Syracuse, N.Y. Accessed through the Onondaga County Public Library. Statistics compiled by combining data from Census Tracts 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, and 15.

Races.” Approximately 15% of residents were “foreign born.” Most of the foreign born residents were from Italy and Germany, and smaller numbers were born in other European countries such as Poland, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. There is no neighborhood level data on occupation or income.

The 1970 Census shows that the Northside neighborhood continued to decline in population as “White” residents moved away or died (see Figure 2 below).<sup>25</sup> Many factors are likely to have contributed to the neighborhood’s overall population decline. The housing stock continued to age, and the legacy of redlining prevented people from getting resources needed to invest in the properties and prevent further decline.<sup>26</sup> Housing discrimination, predatory practices by real estate investors, and integration of public schools were all part of “white flight” causing people to leave Syracuse and move to the suburbs during this period.

**Figure 2. Population of Northside neighborhood, 1930-2020<sup>27</sup>**



The 1970 Census Tract data report lists 99% of the neighborhood’s 15,153 residents as “White,” 52 (0.3%) residents as “Negro,” and did not provide data on the 0.7% of residents who may have indicated “Other race” or chosen not to answer the race question. About 14% of residents were foreign born, with most identifying that they were born in Italy and Germany. There is no neighborhood level data on occupation or income.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1972). 1970 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts: Syracuse, N.Y. Accessed through the Onondaga County Public Library. Statistics compiled by combining data from Census Tracts 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, and 15.

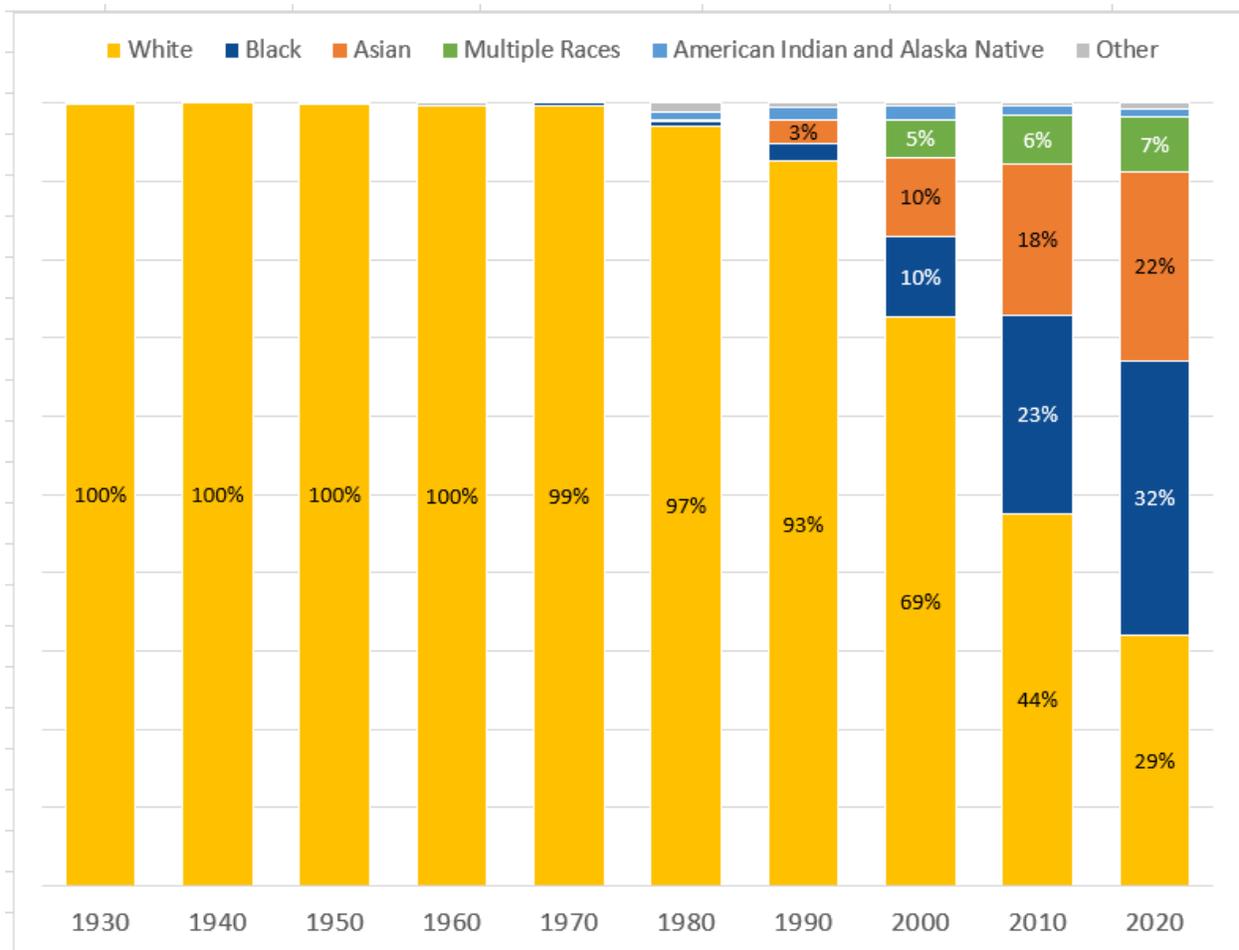
<sup>26</sup> CNY Fair Housing. (2023, August 31). [Redlining in Syracuse: How it led to segregation block busting, and white flight](#). *Central Current*.

<sup>27</sup> Summary of statistics for 2020 Census Tracts 5.01, 6, 7, 14, 15 and their previous equivalents, compiled from decennial censuses between 1930 and 2020.

## 1980

The 1980 Census represents the first time that many race and ethnicity categories start emerging in Northside neighborhood data (see Figure 3 below). Although over 97% of the neighborhood’s 13,158 residents identified as “White” in the 1980 Census, there were 373 residents (3%) who identified as “American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut”; “Black”; “Asian or Pacific Islander”; or “Other Races.”<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the Census Bureau documented 132 “Persons of Spanish Origin” in the Northside neighborhood.

**Figure 3. Summary of Decennial Census data on Residents of the Northside neighborhood by Race, 1930-2020<sup>29</sup>**



According to the 1980 Census, about 13% of neighborhood residents were foreign born at this time. Statistics on the countries of origin of the foreign born were not available at the neighborhood level. However, there is evidence that Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1983). [1980 census of population and housing: Census tracts, Syracuse, N.Y.](#) Statistics compiled by combining data from Census Tracts 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, and 15.

<sup>29</sup> Summary of statistics for 2020 Census Tracts 5.01, 6, 7, 14, 15 and their previous equivalents. Note that some race categories were grouped together for the purposes of showing change over time.

people began resettling in Central New York around this time, along with refugees from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Ethiopia, and the Soviet Jews and Armenians.<sup>30</sup> According to an Onondaga Citizens League study called “The World at Our Doorstep”, the first people officially resettled as refugees in Central New York were the Vietnamese in 1979.<sup>31</sup>

The 1980 Census represents the first time that neighborhood-level data was collected on “people of a single ancestry group” among the whole population, not only among people who were foreign born. The data show that by this time a large share of the neighborhood’s population identified with multiple ancestry groups, and Italians were still the largest ethnic group among those of a single ancestry. Only European countries are identified in the reported data.

The housing stock in the neighborhood continued to decline during this period, and many absentee landlords owned properties in the neighborhood.<sup>32</sup> Neighbors were upset about the growing crime and interested in increasing police visibility.<sup>33</sup>

## **1990 – 2020**

The 1990 Census shows that the racial composition of the Northside neighborhood residents continued to shift. Approximately 93% of the neighborhood’s 12,638 residents identified as “White,” but about 7% did not.<sup>34</sup> Census records indicate that there were 379 “Asian or Pacific Islander” residents, 287 “Black” residents, 216 “American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut” residents, and 54 residents of other races. Additionally, 167 people identified that they were of Hispanic origin; ethnicity was measured separately so it is unclear which races the Hispanic residents identified on their Census forms.

In 1990 about 9% of residents identified as foreign born. No neighborhood level data on country of origin is available, but we know that growing numbers of Southeast Asian residents were living on the North Side at this time, with one article claiming that 75% of the Asian residents of Syracuse lived between Lodi, Butternut, Townsend, Salina, and State Streets.<sup>35</sup> Since 1990, the percent of Northside neighborhood residents who are foreign born has increased to a high of 36% in 2020.

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<sup>30</sup> 5/2/1989 Syracuse Post-Standard article “Churches help adopt refugees” by Vincent F. A. Golphin

<sup>31</sup> Onondaga Citizens League. (2012). [The World at Our Doorstep](#).

<sup>32</sup> 6/21/1991 Syracuse Post-Standard article “Hope for North Side: Zone out sleaze, junk” by Cindy E. Rodriguez

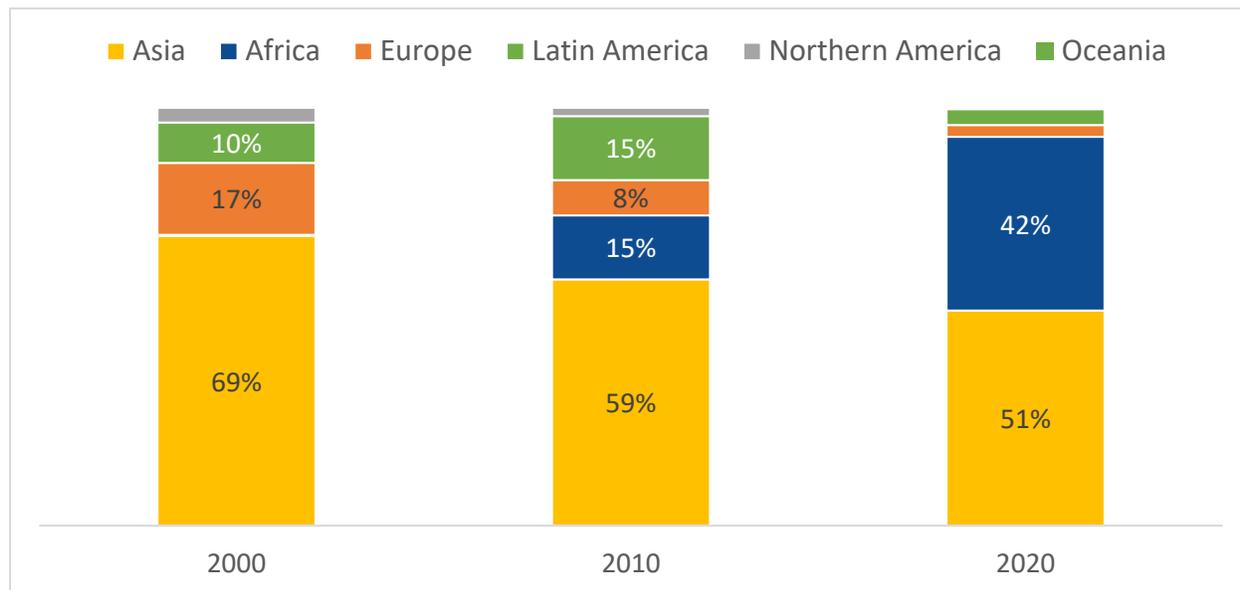
<sup>33</sup> 10/27/1978 Syracuse Post-Standard article “North Side Crime to be topic Sunday”

<sup>34</sup> Syracuse University Research Data Center. (1992). 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Selected Characteristics, Onondaga County tracts 1-169. Accessed through the Onondaga County Public Library. Statistics compiled by combining data from Census Tracts 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, and 15.

<sup>35</sup> 2/7/1989 Syracuse Post-Standard article “Coming to America: Growing Southeast Asian community brings new flavor to Butternut Street. By Annette Ford

In 2000, over two-thirds (69%) of the foreign born population came from Asia, 17% came from Europe, and 10% came from Latin America.<sup>36</sup> The distribution is shown in Figure 4 on the following page.

**Figure 4. Percent of Northside neighborhood foreign born residents by continent of origin, 2000-2020<sup>37</sup>**



Many of Syracuse’s foreign born residents arrived as refugees. The Census does not provide neighborhood level data on refugee status or country of origin, but other sources indicate that between 2001 and 2011 refugees were arriving from dozens of different countries, including Burma, Bhutan, and Somalia.<sup>38</sup> In the most recent decade, the largest numbers of refugees have come from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ukraine.<sup>39</sup> However, a large and diverse number of nations continue to be represented among Syracuse’s newest residents.

<sup>36</sup> Summary of statistics for 2000 Census Tracts 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, and 15, compiled from 2000 decennial census, Table DP2, data available at <https://data.census.gov/>.

<sup>37</sup> Summary of statistics compiled from Census Tracts 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, and 15 from the 2000 Census and from Census Tracts 5.01, 6, 7, 14, 15 from the American Community Survey 5-year estimates from 2010 and 2020, Table DP02.

<sup>38</sup> Onondaga Citizens League. (2012). [The World at Our Doorstep](#).

<sup>39</sup> [Resettled Refugees Services and Data Explorer](#), showing data from the Refugee Processing Center for Syracuse, NY from 2010 and 2020

Between 2000 and 2020, the populations of people identifying as Black, Asian, Hispanic, and multiple races grew significantly, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Northside neighborhood population by Race/Ethnicity, 2000-2020<sup>40</sup>**

RACE/ETHNICITY	2000 (#)	2000 (%)	2010 (#)	2010 (%)	2020 (#)	2020 (%)
White, Non-Hispanic	8,382	69%	5,957	44%	4,122	29%
Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	1,181	10%	3,165	23%	4,519	32%
Asian, Non-Hispanic	1,159	10%	2,429	18%	3,105	22%
Hispanic or Latino	545	5%	1,077	8%	1,154	8%
Two or more races, Non-Hispanic	553	5%	768	6%	918	7%
American Indian and Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic	200	2%	170	1%	130	1%
Some other race, Non-Hispanic	40	0%	23	0%	82	1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	2	0%	3	0%	3	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,062</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13,592</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14,033</b>	<b>100%</b>

Between 1930 and 2000 the Northside neighborhood’s population declined to a low of 12,062 people. Since 2000, the population has been growing. The 2020 Census data indicate that the neighborhood grew by about 2,000 people over the preceding 20 years.

Prepared by Mary Carney Consulting, December 2023

<sup>40</sup> Data compiled from 2000, 2010, and 2020 decennial census reports available at <https://data.census.gov/>.