

2F) Did Urban Renewal Mean "Negro" Removal?

Helpful Vocabulary-

Urban Renewal- government programs to tear down and rebuild older or poorer sections of towns.

Claim RVC Renewal Edges Negroes Out, *Newsday, January 15, 1963*

Rockville Centre -- The NAACP's national housing secretary charged last night that Rockville Centre's urban renewal office had contributed to an exodus of Negro families who had lived and owned property in the village's urban renewal area. Jack Wood Jr. said that about 60 to 72 Negro families who had owned property in the 36-acre area had left Rockville Centre.

Speaking in Watson Elementary School at a meeting sponsored by the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Wood said: "If ever I saw an urban renewal program that contravened the State of New York's policy of promoting racial and economic integration in such projects, the program in Rockville Centre is it."

Babylon Will Condemn 5 Slum Shacks Today, *Newsday, January 31, 1963*

Babylon -- Five slum shacks housing 14 welfare recipients will be condemned today by the Babylon building inspector. Welfare officials said they will immediately seek new housing for the persons to be moved. Herbert Zirk, Babylon Town building inspector, said the five shacks, all occupied by Negroes, were discovered as inspectors made a check of 30 welfare homes in Babylon. He said the five structures were all converted garages or accessory buildings "never intended for use by human beings."

Nassau Negroes Stage Joint Protests, *Newsday, May 5, 1966*

Residents of Rockville Centre and Long Beach joined forces yesterday to protest urban renewal policies in both areas. Members of the Long Island Congress of Racial Equality and of NAACP chapters in Rockville Centre and Long Beach held joint rallies and conducted a 20-car motorcade to draw attention to their grievances concerning housing and job opportunities. In Rockville Centre, about 80 persons gathered on an empty lot strewn with pebbles and broken glass. A succession of speakers called on the village's mayor to provide better homes for West End residents, and signs pasted on the brick veneer of a decrepit building were printed: "Let's end indecent housing," "We want justice," "Houses for all, eviction for none," "We shall not be moved." Civil rights groups have been complaining that urban renewal in Rockville Centre has meant Negro removal. Joseph Kern, a CORE leader in the village, citing a report of the Nassau Commission of Human Rights, said: "About 40 percent of the Negro population of Rockville Centre has been moved out to other slums."

Rockville Centre: Racial 'Stalemate', *Newsday, June 20, 1966*

Rockville Centre -- For the financial comfortable majority of the 27,000 residents of Rockville Centre, the peeling, crumbling Negro neighborhood in the village's West End is the servants' quarters. Here in the aging ghetto of the community selected this month as the Long Island CORE summer target area, about one of every three Negro women earn a living by cooking for their white neighbors and cleaning their homes. More than one quarter of the men who have escaped the area's 12 percent unemployment rate are the unskilled laborers who loiter in front of a rickety bar on Banks Avenue by night and wait for a construction truck to arrive for a morning shape-up.

CORE decided to come to the aid of the Tenants Association--composed of Negro residents of the urban renewal area--according to Jackson, out of simple mercy as well as a realization that CORE could apply itself more effectively in a community already marked by grass roots activism.

Questions:

- 1- Why did the NAACP and CORE protest against urban renewal plans?
- 2- You are a local government official during the 1960's. Propose a compromise solution that could satisfy both civil rights advocates and supporters of urban renewal.