

WE ARE LIMESTONE CREEK:
AN ORAL HISTORY OF LIMESTONE CREEK COMMUNITY JUPITER, FLORIDA

by

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This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor, Dr. Christopher Strain, and has been approved by the members of her/his supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of The Honors College and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences.

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ABSTRACT

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Limestone Creek is an unincorporated community existing within the planning and zoning boundary lines of Jupiter, Florida. Contrasting the economically flush and rapidly developing surrounding municipality of Jupiter, Limestone Creek is a predominantly African American community with an apparent economic gap that leaves the community untouched by development. This thesis project attempts to capture the voices of Limestone Creek and Jupiter residents pertaining to their accounts with an unincorporated area surrounded by a much wealthier municipality. Interviews were conducted with the residents of the community, Palm Beach County and the Town of Jupiter residents and officials, in an effort to explore the existence of an isolated African American community. The research resulted in varied responses to the idea of incorporation because of lack of funds. Conclusions to this research reveal that, to the members of the community, while race underlies all discussions of incorporation the more immediate issue is about securing basic services and infrastructure.

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Introduction:

Limestone Creek is the oldest African American community in Jupiter, Florida. The early settlers of the community migrated from the north in search of work in the area's thriving industries: the local orange groves, ferneries, dairies, sawmills and farms around 1900.¹ Since the late nineteenth century the Town of Jupiter has grown into a thriving municipality in Palm Beach County while Limestone Creek remains to this day a community unincorporated into the town, continuing to exist within the planning and zoning boundary lines of Jupiter. Limestone Creek initially evolved during the era in the South known as Jim Crow which is a combination of accepted laws legalizing segregation of whites and blacks in the south and racial tensions.² Lying in the northwest corner of town away from the waterfront property, Limestone Creek's location was deemed acceptable by white residents for the African American settlers to reside and during the late 1950's became the official home for all of Jupiter's black population

During the time of inception of Limestone Creek, the early residents of the community erected landmarks establishing an African American heritage. The first school built in the area of Jupiter was the Jupiter Colored School, constructed in Limestone Creek. Having since been torn down, the only remnant of the schoolhouse is a slab of concrete engraved with the names of the graduating class of 1936, only four students and the school principal.³ One of the enduring landmarks of the community is

¹ Lynn Lassiter Drake, Jupiter, (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2003)

² Pia Pender, The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Riviera Beach, 1954-1971 (Florida Atlantic University, 1994), 46.

³ Stephen Hunter, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 11 March 2009.

Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church, built in 1903, and credited for being one of the oldest religious institutions in Palm Beach County. According to the church's Pastor, Michael Maeweather, this particular landmark was constructed in the heart of community as a showcase for the local African American legacy and continues to serve the same purpose. As Pastor Maeweather put it, "most residents of Limestone Creek have passed through the doors of this church, a place designed to worship our different structures and heritages."⁴

Over the last century African Americans have maintained a majority status within the community's population and currently, in 2009, the African American population is 77.3%.⁵ This population trend reflects a history and legacy of segregation and racial discrimination. However, the resulting communities, such as Limestone Creek, reflect a heritage of pride in spite of the often negative circumstances of their origins. Pastor Maeweather reflected on the unique history and heritage of the African American population, "Blacks predominantly have their own places. They pertain themselves to certain places, in the African American world we call it 'across the tracks', and we have our own history and heritage that makes us separate."⁶

Limestone Creek has not benefitted from the flourishing development of the surrounding Town of Jupiter, which is common characteristic found in African American

⁴ Pastor Michael Maeweather, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 23 February 2009.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP-1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 Geographic Area: Limestone Creek CDP, Florida.

⁶ Pastor Michael Maeweather, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 23 February 2009.

communities with origins in segregation.⁷ The community is home to more than three generations of community activists that have struggled to bring development into Limestone Creek. By 2009 this area was in a liminal phase with development of planned infrastructure improvements ended unfinished in 1994 after partially developing four roads in the South end of the community; the North end of the community did not benefit from the development of infrastructure of the 1990's and since then the funds have been stopped.⁸ The lack of funds and infrastructure, however, has not taken away the pride of the residents of Limestone Creek regarding its legacy as the first African American settlement of Jupiter; as Pastor Maeweather explains, "The truth about this part of town is that it is not Jupiter. This is Limestone Creek. We are Limestone Creek."⁹

Jupiter and Limestone Creek History: Discrimination, Segregation, Seperation

Most southern counties of Florida, including Palm Beach County, were virtually unsettled before 1900 because of inadequate harbors and a hostile Seminole Tribe.¹⁰ The Town of Jupiter was created around the Jupiter Lighthouse and the Armour family, the lighthouse keepers and the first white family to move to this area, dominated at the time by the Seminole Tribe. After the Armour family moved to Jupiter in the 1860's the area

⁷ Richard L. Morrill and O. Fred Donaldson, "Geographical Perspectives on the History of Black America," Economic Geography 48 (1972): 14.

⁸ Stephen Hunter, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 11 March 2009.

⁹ Pastor Michael Maeweather, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 23 February 2009.

¹⁰ Pia Pender, The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Riviera Beach, 1954-1971 (Florida Atlantic University, 1994), 6.

began to flourish as visitors to the area began to stay and build homes.¹¹ The Pennock family was one of the first to relocate to Jupiter and establish one of the largest fern farms in the area, Pennock Plantation. They were soon followed by the Carlin family who opened the doors of their home as the first hotel in the area. By 1925, Jupiter began to flourish and The Town of Jupiter was incorporated into Palm Beach County as a municipality.¹²

The first African-Americans to reside in Palm Beach County were probably runaway slaves who had fled south from plantations in north Florida and joined with the Seminole Indians who often provided food and shelter for escaped slaves.¹³ After the Civil War both whites and blacks migrated to Florida because of the benefits of large tracts of unsettled land. This migration trend saw a rise in the number of settlers between 1870 and 1900, the population in Florida grew by 181.5% and African Americans comprised over 40% of Florida's total population increase during that time period.¹⁴ The construction and railway work, as well as the developing tourist industry and the area's vegetable and citrus crops, provided new economic opportunities for African-Americans in Palm Beach County. Most African-Americans who migrated to South Florida during this intense surge of settlement migrated from northern Florida and Georgia.¹⁵

¹¹ James D. Snyder, Five Thousand Years on the Loxahatchee: A Pictorial History of Jupiter/Tequesta Florida, (Jupiter: Pharos Books, 2003), 30.

¹² Ibid. 105.

¹³ Pia Pender, The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Riviera Beach, 1954-1971 (Florida Atlantic University, 1994), 6.

¹⁴ Raymond A. Mohl, "The Settlement of Blacks in South Florida," in Thomas D. Boswell, ed., South Florida: The Winds of Change (Miami: The Association of American Geographers, 1991), 112-113.

¹⁵ Ibid., 118.

Local economic opportunities, such as the Pennock Plantation, Carlin House, orange groves, and sawmills, brought African Americans to the Jupiter area during the settlement of Palm Beach County. In the years following the first migration of African Americans to Jupiter, most resided close to their place of employment since commuting long distances over the large rural landscape was impossible. In the area of Jupiter, blacks and whites lived in clusters on the rural landscape near where they worked. The most heavily populated community in Jupiter was the “Bama”, an African American community on the outskirts of the Pennock Plantation where plantation workers and their families resided. The Limestone Creek community was located next to the orange groves to the west of the Bama.¹⁶ A racially segregated residential pattern had prevailed in Palm Beach County for the entire twentieth century and by the 1920’s additional small black communities were scattered along the South Florida coast up to Jupiter. Racial zoning confined these early black neighborhoods to designated areas usually alongside and just to the west of the Florida East Coast Railway tracks.¹⁷

By the late 1880’s a new generation of African Americans had emerged in the South, “New Negroes”, as they were often called, had no experience with slavery, were better educated, and were more assertive of their rights, had emerged in the South. Southern whites were threatened by the resistance of these other Southern blacks and began to seek opportunities to reassert their social control. In turn “northern whites were

¹⁶ James D. Snyder, Five Thousand Years on the Loxahatchee: A Pictorial History of Jupiter/Tequesta Florida, (Jupiter: Pharos Books, 2003), 191.

¹⁷ Raymond A. Mohl, “The Settlement of Blacks in South Florida,” in Thomas D. Boswell, ed., South Florida: The Winds of Change (Miami: The Association of American Geographers, 1991), 125.

more concerned about the problems of industrial development and competition as well as colonialism and “the white man’s burden”¹⁸ than the progress of southern African-Americans”. Taking advantage of the disinterest of Northern whites, Southern states subsequently passed the Jim Crow laws that legalized segregation and institutionalized inferior conditions for African-Americans in the South.¹⁹ In 1896, the United States Supreme Court ruled on *Plessy v. Ferguson*, asserting racially separate facilities were constitutional as long as they were equal. During the next several years the South passed many segregation laws that created separate and inferior facilities and public accommodations.²⁰

Until around 1945 the white and black populations of Jupiter co-existed in what one author called a “delicate but dependable relationship” that began to deteriorate with the 1945 edition of the state census, which for the first time provided one list for whites and a second list for “colored”.²¹ During the rest of the county’s Civil Rights battle for integration, Jupiter suddenly went in the opposite direction in 1957. One resident of the “Bama”, Ella Preston Rollins, recalls a visit from the owner of the Pennock Plantation letting her know that all of the blacks had to be moved out to west Jupiter to Limestone Creek. The land of the Pennock Plantation was being sold off in parcels as a way to ready the land for development. The Pennocks enabled the move of their black residents from

¹⁸ Pia Pender, The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Riviera Beach, 1954-1971 (Florida Atlantic University, 1994), 46.

¹⁹ Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990), 4-5; Jack M. Bloom, Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 4.

²⁰ Ibid. 75.

²¹ Ibid. 191.

the Bama by presenting the forced migration as an opportunity for the African Americans of Jupiter. Prior to the visit from Hank Pennock, Ella Preston Rollins had recently married and built a home in the Bama; Pennock saw to it that her house was loaded onto logs and rolled to her new home in Limestone Creek. The Pennocks also owned lots in Limestone Creek and presented the move to this segregated community as an opportunity by providing their tenants a “pay me when you can” offer that served as a financial break for many residents being moved west and presented an opportunity for home ownership outside of a tenant community.²²

From this point on it became “an unwritten law that no blacks lived east of U.S. 1 from Jupiter to West Palm Beach” and by around 1960 it was understood that the Jupiter Police would not patrol Limestone Creek.²³ Very soon after the forced migration to Limestone Creek, residents of the community who went into Jupiter were faced with special side doors labeled “colored” at the local drug store, no bathroom availability, restricted beaches and separate schools. Prior to the forced segregation, the blacks of Jupiter would face “rough [white] boys who ran in gangs” outside the grocery store; however, African Americans were allowed in the stores of Jupiter. At that time the black population did not attempt to force integration as noted by Ida Harris Connaway “if someone says they don’t want you on a certain beach, well, you just wouldn’t want to go where you’re not welcome.”²⁴

Forced segregation generated a tighter community for Limestone Creek giving

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. 192.

community landmarks such as Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church and the Jupiter Colored School the ability to strengthen community ties with a larger population.²⁵ Mt. Carmel Baptist Church is a part of a larger organization of Missionary Baptist Churches that cater to a congregation of predominantly African Americans. The Missionary Baptist Church is designed to celebrate the heritage of African Americans and has a distinctive structure to the services notably with the messages of the sermons and the type of songs sung in the church. Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church was built in Limestone Creek in 1906 because of the area's predominant African American population and as Pastor Maeweathers says, "we have fought to live amongst one another but as a black culture in Jupiter we need to live amongst ourselves."²⁶

Just as Mount Carmel Missionary Baptist Church served as a home for the African American heritage of Limestone Creek and as an example of a segregated social facility, the African American grade school serves as another. The grade school that served the children of Limestone Creek was first formally known as the Jupiter Colored School built in 1926 later changed to the L.M. Davis School.²⁷ The high school-age students of the community were bused to West Palm Beach to the predominantly African American school, Roosevelt High School until integration of schools in Palm Beach County in 1961.

In 1961, along with Lake Worth and Seacrest High Schools, Jupiter High School

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Pastor Michael Maeweather, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 23 February 2009.

²⁷ Stephen Hunter, interviewed by Sara Stout, 11 March 2009. See also James D. Snyder, Five Thousand Years on the Loxahatchee: A Pictorial History of Jupiter/Tequesta Florida, (Jupiter: Pharos Books, 2003), 192.

was forcibly integrated by the Palm Beach County School Board.²⁸ Five local black educators and civil rights activists went to the school district and demanded integration of Palm Beach County schools. The school board created a plan to integrate schools in Palm Beach County in the fall of 1961 by accepting a group of chosen African American students to enter the senior classes of the five schools. Jupiter High School was tapped as one of the integrated schools. A few days before school began at Jupiter High the team of civil rights activists fighting for integration decided that all but one of the five selected students for integration was academically prepared to endure the entire year at Jupiter High School. The first and only African American student to enter Jupiter High School in the fall of 1961 was Limestone Creek resident Iris Hunter.²⁹ Hunter recalls entering Jupiter High School on the first day with a woman pointing a shot gun at her claiming she would shoot Hunter if she entered the school. The remaining year was just as tumultuous as the first day. The Town of Jupiter eventually accepted integration and by 1970 there was an African American star on every sports team at Jupiter High School.³⁰

Even though the Town of Jupiter legally accepted integration of town facilities by the 1970's, the legacy of the Jim Crow era and the forced segregation of the town exists in current day Limestone Creek.

Welcome to Black Suburbia:

²⁸ Pia Pender, The Modern Civil Rights Movement in Riviera Beach, 1954-1971 (Florida Atlantic University, 1994), 68.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 193.

The Limestone Creek community embodies ramifications from the Jim Crow era that swept the nation, and particularly the South. The community, like many African American communities, is left with the problems of weak municipal services and lack of funding.³¹ The data recorded by the U.S. Census Bureau for the 1980's and 1990's provides a statistical depiction of the outcome of the official segregation of Jupiter's African American population to the western end of town during the late 1950's. The U.S. Census Bureau from the 1980's and 1990's statistically depicts the aftermath of racial tensions that can be observed in the economic and race disparity between the Town of Jupiter and the black community of Limestone Creek. In order to illustrate the impact of discrimination of the African Americans in Jupiter it helps to look at the following trends: percentage of race for the population, household income and median property value for the United States, Florida, Jupiter, and Limestone Creek. Douglas S. Massey provides a formulaic description for what a black suburb often looks like statistically:

They are often older manufacturing suburbs with a weak tax base, poor municipal services, and a high level of debt. Compared to white suburbs, property values are lower and taxes are higher. Black suburbs spend a larger share of their revenues on social services and experience higher crime rates.³²

Massey's description provides as accurate account of what Limestone Creek has looked like for the past thirty years with a focus on the weak municipal services. However, Massey predicts a high crime rate for an African American suburb community, for Limestone Creek this is statistically false though it is a part of the perceived character of

³¹ Richard L. Morrill and O. Fred Donaldson, "Geographical Perspectives on the History of Black America," Economic Geography 48 (1972): 16.

³² Douglas S. Massey, "Geography of Inequality in Urban America," in Race, Poverty, and Domestic Policy, ed. C. Michael Henry (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 177.

the community by the surrounding, mainly white, communities.³³

According to the 2000 Census, the total suburban population of the United States was 27% minority, a 95% increase from 1990. However, as new minority residents entered suburbia the separation of races was just as strong as ten years prior.³⁴ As recorded by the 2000 Census, the state of Florida had a total African American population of 15.8% and a Caucasian population of 80.2%. During this time only 1.2% of the population of Jupiter, Florida, excluding unincorporated areas such as Limestone Creek, was represented by African Americans while 94.9% of the area remained Caucasian. Limestone Creek contained a somewhat more diverse population with African Americans representing 77.3% of its population and 10.7% Caucasian.^{35,36}

The median household income for Limestone Creek is documented as significantly lower than the state of Florida and the surrounding Town of Jupiter. The 2000 Census recorded the median household income for the state of Florida as \$40,900 and the Town of Jupiter as \$53,954.³⁷ In 2000, the median household income for

³³ U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP-1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 Geographic Area: Limestone Creek CDP, Florida.

³⁴ John R. Logan, "Ethnic Diversity, Neighborhood Integration," in Redefining Urban and Suburban America Evidence from Census 2000 Volume One, ed. Bruce Katz and Robert E. Lang (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2003), 248-250.

³⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP-1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 Geographic Area: Limestone Creek CDP, Florida.

³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP-1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 Geographic Area: Jupiter Municipality, Florida.

³⁷ Ibid.

Limestone Creek was \$31,125, which is \$23,829 below the Town of Jupiter median household income.³⁸

Figure 1 A house in Limestone Creek³⁹



The property values of Limestone Creek follow a similar pattern to the median household incomes. In 2000 the median property values of homes in Limestone Creek were recorded as \$87,000 while homes in Jupiter were valued at \$149,200. As noted by several residents of the community, it is more cost efficient to build a home or purchase land in Limestone Creek and these economic factors make the community more appealing. Resident Stephen Hunter, a lifetime member of Limestone Creek, chose to

³⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP-1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 Geographic Area: Limestone Creek CDP, Florida.

³⁹ Jeremy DeChario, "Series 2 Image #1", Jupiter 2009.

build his home in the community for such positive economic reasons when he bought a parcel of land and built his home in the community in 1970.

When we got married in 1970 my wife and I were considered young professionals we were both making enough money to go down to West Palm Palm and buy a big house. Instead I bought a piece of land and built a 2300 square foot home for under \$40,000. I don't understand...at that time the place to live was Jupiter Farms, but I would have had to pay twice as much just for the land.⁴⁰

Limestone Creek has historically been economically providing a financial break for African Americans since West Jupiter lacked infrastructure and development longer than the white areas, keeping land values down. The lower prices of homes and land proved to be better financially for the African Americans that were previously segregated westward and now serves as a socially contrived barrier to maintain the racial and spatial status quo during segregation. The weak municipal service of Limestone Creek has translated into lack of development of infrastructure for the community as well.

As Massey predicted, the residents of Limestone Creek have historically invested their own funds into social service programs for the community. At the start of the migration of blacks into the community from other settlements in Jupiter, residents spearheaded the creation of their own fire department, called the West Jupiter Volunteer Fire Department.⁴¹ According to Stephen Hunter, this service was the forefront of activism in the community.⁴² In current day Limestone Creek, the main social service implemented by the community's revenue is the local neighborhood security program

⁴⁰ Stephen Hunter, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 11 March 2009.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Stephen Hunter, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 11 March 2009.

which employs residents in citizens' patrol for Limestone Creek.⁴³

Since the forced migration of African Americans to West Jupiter in 1957, Limestone Creek, according to the Census Bureau, has maintained a population of mostly blacks. In addition to racial discrimination and economic factors that keep African American communities relatively homogenous, choice can play a significant role as well. John R. Logan, Professor of Sociology of Brown University argues that the recorded numbers show a persistence of residential segregation of minorities in the suburbs that can be partly explained as the result of newly suburban group members moving into the same neighborhood in which members of their ethnicity already reside.⁴⁴ In response to segregation, races sometimes experience an internal pressure to continue living in communities created during segregation. Limestone Creek resident, Robert Tatum seems to confirm Logan's conclusions saying:

A lot of times it's your neighbors and lifestyle and stuff like that right there. You know a lot of uh...black families and stuff they like to barbeque and people come over for the holidays. You know...you work hard, you play hard, you party hard. You know, and the your neighbors are complaining and everything else, it just causes problems so you go into an area where if you have a damn party or somethin' the neighbors aren't going to call the cops, they are going to come over and join you.⁴⁵

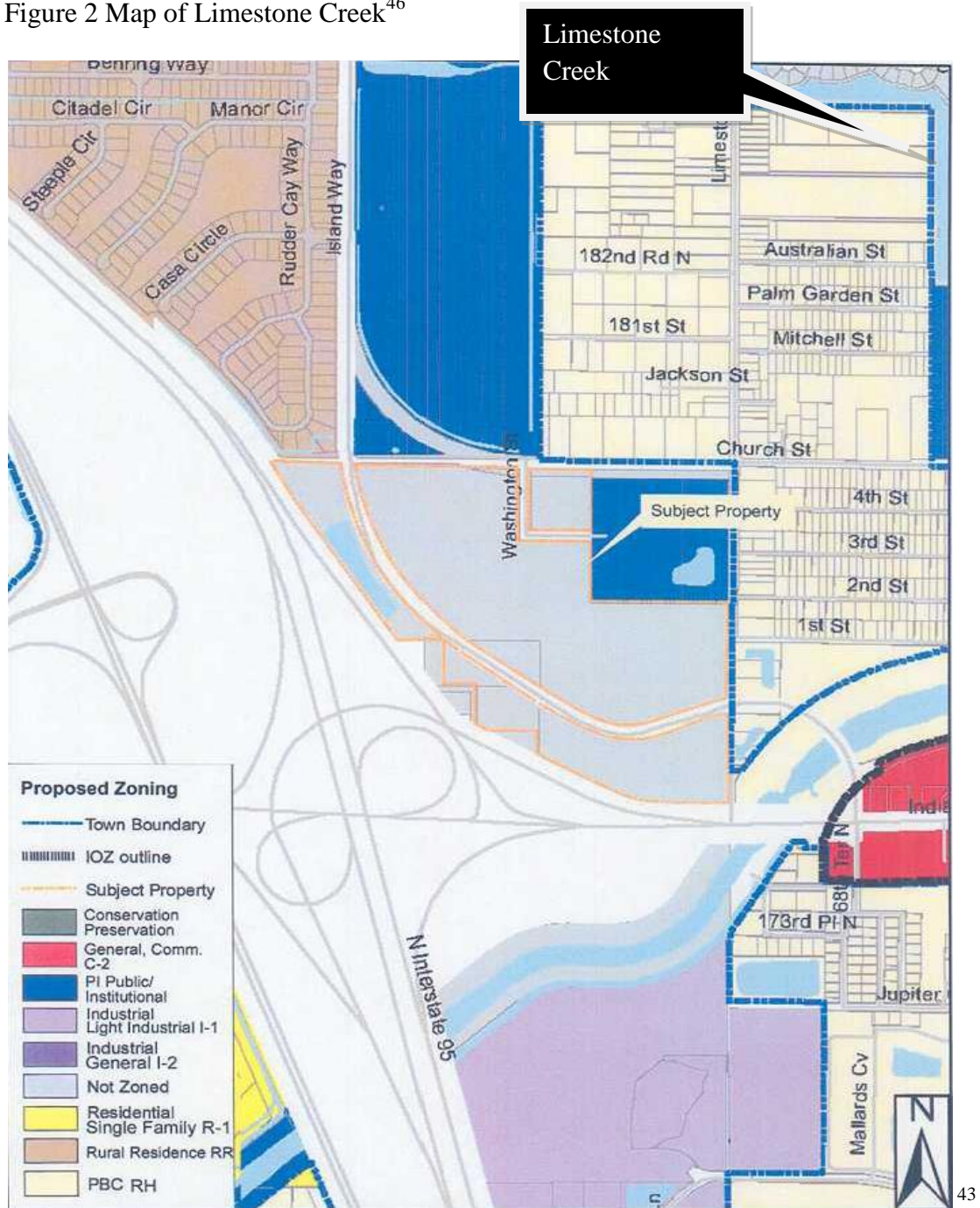
The feelings of this community member and the Census Bureau statistics provide some explanation for the existence of a predominantly black community after desegregation.

⁴³ Mathew Smith, interviewed by Sara M. Stout 19 January 2009.

⁴⁴ John R. Logan, "Ethnic Diversity, Neighborhood Integration," in Redefining Urban and Suburban America Evidence from Census 2000 Volume One, ed. Bruce Katz and Robert E. Lang (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2003), 248-250.

⁴⁵ Robert Tatum, interviewed by Sara M. Stout 19 January 2009.

Figure 2 Map of Limestone Creek⁴⁶



⁴⁶ The Town of Jupiter. "2008 Zoning Map of Jupiter." *Planning and Zoning Resources: GIS Mapping*. 2009. <http://www.jupiter.fl.us/PlanningAndZoning/upload/Zoning-2008-smaller.jpg> (accessed January 20, 2009).

To whom does this community belong?

Limestone Creek's weak municipal services have translated into an undeveloped infrastructure for the community which are characteristics seen in many African American communities. The community has become reliant on garnering funding from Palm Beach County or the possibility of incorporation into the Town of Jupiter in order to further develop the infrastructure of the community. Over the last century the Limestone Creek community has continued to be home to a predominantly African-American population while the surrounding town of Jupiter has developed and incorporated lands surrounding the small neighborhood. The community has continued to exist in north Jupiter about twenty miles away from Palm Beach County's government complex in West Palm Beach and two miles from Jupiter Town Hall. Limestone Creek has been the center of conflict for both governments for more almost two decades with residents demanding infrastructure and safety improvements for the area. During the early 1990's Limestone Creek succeeded in winning a garbage pick-up service, a park for the children of the community, and paved roads for the South end of the community. The community is still fighting for paved roads, sidewalks for the children to walk to the local elementary school, and the removal of dangerous drainage ditches throughout the community.

With dirt roads, small substandard and some dilapidated homes, and no sidewalks the neighborhood resembles a forgotten neighborhood from an earlier era amidst affluent Jupiter; the community is surrounded by sparkling new developments like The Shores

which borders Limestone Creek.⁴⁷ The residents of Limestone Creek have mostly been able to depend upon local community groups for assistance with aesthetic improvements through neighborhood clean-up projects and therefore have taken renovation projects into their own hands. Since the formation of several neighborhood activist groups such as West Jupiter Community Group in 1989, Limestone Creek has been able to make marginal improvements; however, the need for money to undertake some of the larger projects still exists in 2009.

In 1991, two prominent Limestone Creek community activists, Verline Smith and Stephen Hunter began vocally petitioning Palm Beach County demanding safety improvements for children in the underdeveloped community. One of the first campaigns begun by the activist duo was a tour with town officials of the empty drainage ditches that lines the roads of the community. Smith had a small boy stand inside of the ditch to demonstrate the depth and the serious threat to the neighborhood children when the ditches are filled with water. The community lacked sidewalks for children to safely walk to Limestone Creek Elementary School located in the entrance to the neighborhood. Smith and Hunter modeled their sidewalk campaign after the success Jupiter Farms had in raising money for sidewalks that lead to their schools, though the effort in Limestone Creek proved unsuccessful⁴⁸ One of the few success accomplished by Smith and Hunter was the addition of a park in the community, Limestone Creek Park on Limestone Creek Road, with the land donated by a landowner and the funds collected through local

⁴⁷ Editorial, "For Limestone Creek, An Overdue Promise," The Palm Beach Post, 15 March 1992,

⁴⁸ Stephen Pounds, "Limestone Creek Residents Work for Better Life," The Palm Beach Post, 3 March 1991, Local Section 1B.

businesses and civic groups. In an interview with the *Palm Beach Post* in 1991, Smith cited race as one of the main underlying issues, a view shared by many in the community, for the lack of access to funds from the county and the surrounding town. Limestone Creek is perceived as having suffered from a backlash regarding discrimination that has, in effect, left the community unincorporated and low on the priority list of Palm Beach County for improvement. The *Palm Beach Post* wrote:

Smith believes the Limestone Creek community has long been neglected because it is predominantly black. The eyes of elected officials glaze over when Smith talks of filling in roads and building sidewalks...⁴⁹

Throughout the 1990's the community continued to fight for the same causes and winning small battles along the way with a hope of annexation into Jupiter in the back of the residents minds. The residents of Limestone Creek and The Town of Jupiter were both promised that before incorporation the infrastructure of the community would be developed and Palm Beach County would pay.

In 1992, after being passed over for annexation again, the residents of Limestone Creek were living in a community on 'death watch', according to the *Palm Beach Post*,⁵⁰ and after complaining to Jupiter officials, The Town of Jupiter called in the county to intervene, demanding that a task force assess the situation faced by the community. The Limestone Creek Task Force was created with funds from Palm Beach County with the expectation to develop the infrastructure of the community in several phases that included the implementation of water and sewer lines before the placement of

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Editorial, "For Limestone Creek, An Overdue Promise," The Palm Beach Post, 15 March 1992, Opinion Section 2E.

roads and sidewalks. The implementation of the Task Force was developed out of the assumption that the Town of Jupiter would annex the area if Palm Beach County paid for the necessary improvements. As resident Stephen Hunter put it,

The main reason the Jupiter Task Force was set up, see Jupiter's idea was to fix the community before we incorporated. The county would foot the bill, put everything in place, and then we'll [Jupiter] look at incorporation.⁵¹

During the First phase planned by the Task Force, Church Street and First Street up to Fourth had water and sewage lines put in place, along with sidewalks and paved roads. After the conclusion of the first phase in 1994, Palm Beach County claimed that the funds were gone and the Limestone Creek Task Force was disbanded along with the last phases of development, leaving the North end undeveloped. Palm Beach County and Jupiter did not follow through on the agreement set forth.⁵² The Jupiter Town Manager, Lee Evett told the *Palm Beach Post*:

We [Jupiter] are prepared to annex at any time if the mechanism is in place for continuing the county improvement process... Until now, the town has been wary of annexing the community because it didn't want the financial responsibility of providing expensive improvements⁵³

Since the Limestone Creek Task Force was unable to garner more funding from Palm Beach County, further improvements to the community were placed on hold. Stephen Hunter, co-founder of the West Jupiter Community Group, claims that Palm Beach County was only willing to allocate the funds for development of areas that created

⁵¹ Stephen Hunter, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 11 March 2009.

⁵² Editorial, "For Limestone Creek, An Overdue Promise," The Palm Beach Post, 15 March 1992, Opinion Section 2E.

⁵³ Joe Brogan, "Residents Tidy Up Limestone Creek for Annexation," The Palm Beach Post, 30 January 1994, Local Section 5B.

revenue for Palm Beach County: the main streets with more expensive homes, Limestone Creek Elementary School, and Mount Carmel Baptist Church.⁵⁴ At the conclusion of the first phase only four streets of Limestone Creek has access to sewer and water lines, so in 2004, ten years after stepping down from his position as community advocate, Stephen Hunter petitioned Commissioner Karen Marcus to find more funds to extend the water and sewage lines to more parts of the community.

I turned around and I went back to Commissioner Marcus, could be five years ago sometime my dates are off, and I says ‘well if you’re not going to have the money to improve the remainder of Limestone Creek at least everyone that fronts Limestone Creek road should be having the option to have the water and sewer and as a result I’m one of them, my property fronts Limestone Creek. So I get water. Do I feel good now that my neighbors that are 200 feet away don’t have water? I don’t, but, it’s like you know, there is only so much that you can do.’⁵⁵

By 1995 and 1996, with the North end roads of Limestone Creek still left unpaved, no sidewalks for the children of the majority of the community to safely walk to school, and water still coming from wells (for residents not on Limestone Creek Road or included in the first phase of the Task Force), the local leaders continued to work internally for the improvement of Limestone Creek. Members of the community still seeking development of Limestone Creek without funding from Palm Beach County began asking people to clean up their yards, petitioning for funding to tear down dilapidated homes, and moving homeless people from abandoned structures.⁵⁶

While Limestone Creek suffered from relative neglect by the Palm Beach County

⁵⁴ Stephen Hunter, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 11 March 2009.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Fran Hathaway, “Saving Neighborhoods House By House,” The Palm Beach Post, 25 June 1995, Opinion Section 1F.

government, by 1991 the Town of Jupiter was aggressively seeking to annex The Shores, a partially built up-scale neighborhood directly north and east of Limestone Creek. The Town of Jupiter Council Members cited tax purposes as the reasoning for annexing the new community. The residents of The Shores used town roads and facilities and did not pay taxes for the maintenance of said facilities and Jupiter wanted the amount of money the community would bring to the Town of Jupiter in taxes. Council Member Dominic Sims, as quoted by the *Palm Beach Post* in 1991, states the obligation of the residents of The Shores have to contribute to the maintenance of town facilities regularly used by residents such as the Town of Jupiter roads.

I think we should go after the annexation," Council Member Dominic Sims said Thursday. We need to talk to residents and find out what they expect to get from the town. Council Member Carol Deegan also favors annexing The Shores. Those residents use the town roads and facilities. They should be paying taxes to the town," she said. The Shores' taxable valuation in 1990 was \$46.5 million, according to county records. That amount would have brought the town about \$70,000 in tax money...⁵⁷

By March of 1993, Jupiter officially annexed the community and transformed it into The Shores of Jupiter through a Referendum on the 1993 ballot.⁵⁸ The Town of Jupiter aggressively fought to annex this unfinished planned community bordering Limestone Creek because the residents used town roads and facilities. Limestone Creek residents used the same roads and facilities; however, the residents would not bring enough money

⁵⁷ Joe Brogan, "Jupiter Officials Pushing for Annexation of The Shores," The Palm Beach Post, 30 June 1991, Local Section 12B.

⁵⁸ Joe Brogan, "Jupiter Eyes Fees For Property Not Yet On Tax Rolls," The Palm Beach Post, 13 July 1993, Local Section 2B.

in taxes to woo the Town of Jupiter.⁵⁹ While annexation of land continues around Limestone Creek, the historical community continues to sit and be forgotten by the county and the Town of Jupiter.

Following Jupiter's 1993 annexation of The Shores, The Landings were incorporated into the Town of Jupiter in 1995. Now known as Jupiter Landings, the neighborhoods lies on the opposite side of Central Boulevard from Limestone Creek and is a little northeast of the community.⁶⁰ Town officials reported that the annexation of Jupiter Landings cost the Town of Jupiter a purported \$36,000 while the town would be able to generate \$86,583 through increased property taxes. Very similar to the annexation of The Shores, the Town of Jupiter felt that the residents living in The Landings had access to Jupiter town roads and amenities and were not paying the taxes for the maintenance and the town was able to generate more funds from the neighborhood through higher taxation on the residents.⁶¹

During the early 1990's the Town of Jupiter aggressively pursued annexation of over ten neighborhoods in an attempt to follow a plan set forth for town expansion. The Town of Jupiter focused especially on neighborhoods that were close to the county border lines. Some of the neighborhoods that were considered for annexation needed considerable upgrades and the Town of Jupiter and Palm Beach County made several deals to split the costs of the upgrades if the town agreed to annex the land. The Town of

⁵⁹ The Town of Jupiter Planning and Zoning Department, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 18 February 2009.

⁶⁰ Joe Brogan, "Jupiter Landings Voters Approve Annexation," The Palm Beach Post, 8 November 1995, Local Section 2B.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Jupiter decided on an annexation program as discussed by Jupiter Town attorney, Tom Baird:

A comprehensive annexation program can sometimes even out what the town spends and gets in return... Then taxes from the more expensive area would balance off the need for more town services for the less expensive area.⁶²

In 1992, the annexation plans for the Town of Jupiter Planning and Zoning was to incorporate neighborhoods that would be able to produce enough funds to cover the rising need for costly town services during the annexation of a less affluent neighborhood. The comprehensive plan set forth by the Town of Jupiter was to annex two neighborhoods at a time; a wealthy one that would compensate for the less affluent neighborhood paired with it. The Shores and The Landings were both annexed unaccompanied by other neighborhoods on town referendums through both annexations provided a perfect opportunity to incorporate Limestone Creek since both communities were able to generate more funds for the Town of Jupiter.

Current day Limestone Creek closely resembles the Limestone Creek of 1989 with the exception of a park, a few paved roads, and water from the town of Jupiter at a premium price because the community is not incorporated residents using the Town of Jupiter water pay an additional tax.⁶³ The changes and renovations made to this forgotten community north of Indiantown Road have been brought about by the residents of the community. Palm Beach County and Jupiter have come under attack by the residents demanding improvements but have grudgingly put up the funding for very few

⁶² Joe Brogan, "Jupiter Studying Pluses and Minuses of Annexation," The Palm Beach Post, 6 June 1992, Local Section 2B.

⁶³ Caitlin Farinelli, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 29 January 2009.

developments. The residents have needed to challenge Palm Beach County in order to get funding for safety improvements while Jupiter refuses annexation until the improvements are completed at the cost of Palm Beach County.

Frustration with this process and the lack of results has undermined any sense of belonging to the surrounding Town of Jupiter for the residents of Limestone Creek. With the disappearance of their wells, many residents they pay their water bill, plus a premium, to the Town of Jupiter; their police force is Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department; their addresses listed as Jupiter Florida addresses; their ancestors were some of the first African Americans to settle in what was then considered West Jupiter, and now viewed as a northern satellite extension of Palm Beach County. The promises made by the county and the Town of Jupiter in 1995 are long forgotten; many of the streets are still unpaved and are missing sidewalks. Saving this neighborhood house by house did not happen.

Figure 3: Photograph of Children after school on Limestone Creek Road⁶⁴



⁶⁴ Jeremy DeChario, "Series 2 image #2", Jupiter 2009.

Physical and Legal Barriers of Limestone Creek

During the official segregation that came with the forced migration in 1957, Limestone Creek was viewed as an ideal location for the white residents who wanted to maintain a spatial segregation of the black and white residents of Jupiter. The community is situated in the north-west section of the town, away from valuable waterfront property, and during this time was provided little in the way of developed roads making travel to and from this underdeveloped section challenging. The barriers of Limestone Creek essentially locked-in the African American community of West Jupiter, keeping residents away from east Jupiter. Current day Limestone Creek residents are not barricaded away from Jupiter by the underdevelopment of the 1950's and 1960's. Today the residents are challenged by newly developed physical barriers and continued relative underdevelopment. Other parts of West Jupiter have flourished with the development of new roads and shopping centers. Consequently, the development of the area has re-created the constricting barriers that ultimately prevent Limestone Creek from expansion. Physical barriers were, and are, not the only trials faced by the residents. During official segregation, the black population was not welcome east of U.S. 1 because of their second class status and was forced into one section of town.⁶⁵ That section of town, Limestone Creek, has acquired an undeserved reputation of high drug and crime rates that has created fear in the mainly white residents of Jupiter and which prevented integration and acceptance into the surrounding area. While these prejudicial attitudes help maintain relative isolation, the segregation of African Americans in West Jupiter has over the

⁶⁵ Snyder, Five Thousand Years on the Loxahatchee: A Pictorial History of Jupiter/Tequesta Florida ,(Jupiter: Pharos Books, 2003), 191.

decades generated a tighter community in response.

The Town of Jupiter worked on developing and expanding the infrastructure of West Jupiter, excluding Limestone Creek, and successfully completed their final projects during the 1990's. Robert Tatum, a resident of Limestone Creek since 1982 describes West Jupiter as being isolated from the rest of the town in previous years because of the lack of accessible roads:

There was nothin'. [Interstate I-] 95 wasn't even out here. If you get on 95 you have to go down to PGA [Boulevard]. You had Military Trail, U.S. 1 and A1A. Those were your only traveling routes...you couldn't get on 95 from here...you have to go up to Hobe Sound or Stuart to get on.⁶⁶

The Town of Jupiter's expansion projects created an exit and entrance ramp to Interstate 95, which acts a border on the west side of Limestone Creek. Interstate I-95 borders the west end of the community and Indiantown Road was widened from a two way road into a six lane road which borders the south side of Limestone Creek, and the completion of Island Way, a through pass to the Martin County Line in 2005.⁶⁷ To the east of the community lies Central Boulevard, a two way road and to the north is the incorporated neighborhood, The Shores and Jupiter.⁶⁸ Limestone Creek is barricaded on all four sides by the development surrounding the community consequently blocking the community from expansion and contrasting the lack of development inside of Limestone Creek.

⁶⁶ Robert Tatum, interviewed by Sara M. Stout. 19 January 2009.

⁶⁷ Jennifer Sorenture and Pamela Perez, "Builder Ups Ante to Expand and Homes Project," The Palm Beach Post, 21 November 2005, 1B.

⁶⁸ The Town of Jupiter. "2008 Zoning Map of Jupiter." *Planning and Zoning Resources: GIS Mapping*. 2009. <http://www.jupiter.fl.us/PlanningAndZoning/upload/Zoning-2008-smaller.jpg> (accessed January 20, 2009).

While the expansion projects initiated by the Town of Jupiter physically separate Limestone Creek from the town, zoning ordinances of Palm Beach County and the Town of Jupiter legally divide the community from the Town of Jupiter. The Town of Jupiter officially incorporated as a municipality of Palm Beach County in 1925 with its own governing body in the form of an elected Town Council and Mayor.⁶⁹ As a result of the forced migration of Jupiter's African American population in 1957 the community of Limestone Creek evolved into an unincorporated area of the town. By 1960, it was understood that the police force of Jupiter was not responsible for patrolling the community, consequently forcing the residents to form their own social services through the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department, the neighborhood watch program, and the community building and staffing their own fire department.⁷⁰ The evolution of events since 1957 have led to current planning and zoning laws of the Town of Jupiter that exclude Limestone Creek from the town enforcing a legal barrier on the community.

The omission of Limestone Creek from the planning and zoning boundaries of the Town of Jupiter forces the residents of the community to depend on social services provided by Palm Beach County. Resident Patricia Smith expressed a common frustration with this arrangement:

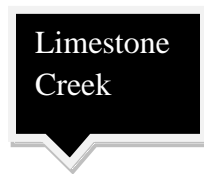
If you have to put something like a new roof on the house we don't go to the Town of Jupiter, we gotta go all the way down to West Palm Beach. I think it is ridiculous. My husband just put a new roof on this house and I thought we had to go through the Town of Jupiter, but no we have to go down to West Palm Beach. I

⁶⁹ James D. Snyder, Five Thousand Years on the Loxahatchee: A Pictorial History of Jupiter/Tequesta Florida, (Jupiter: Pharos Books, 2003), 105.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 191. See also Stephen Hunter, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 11 March 2009.

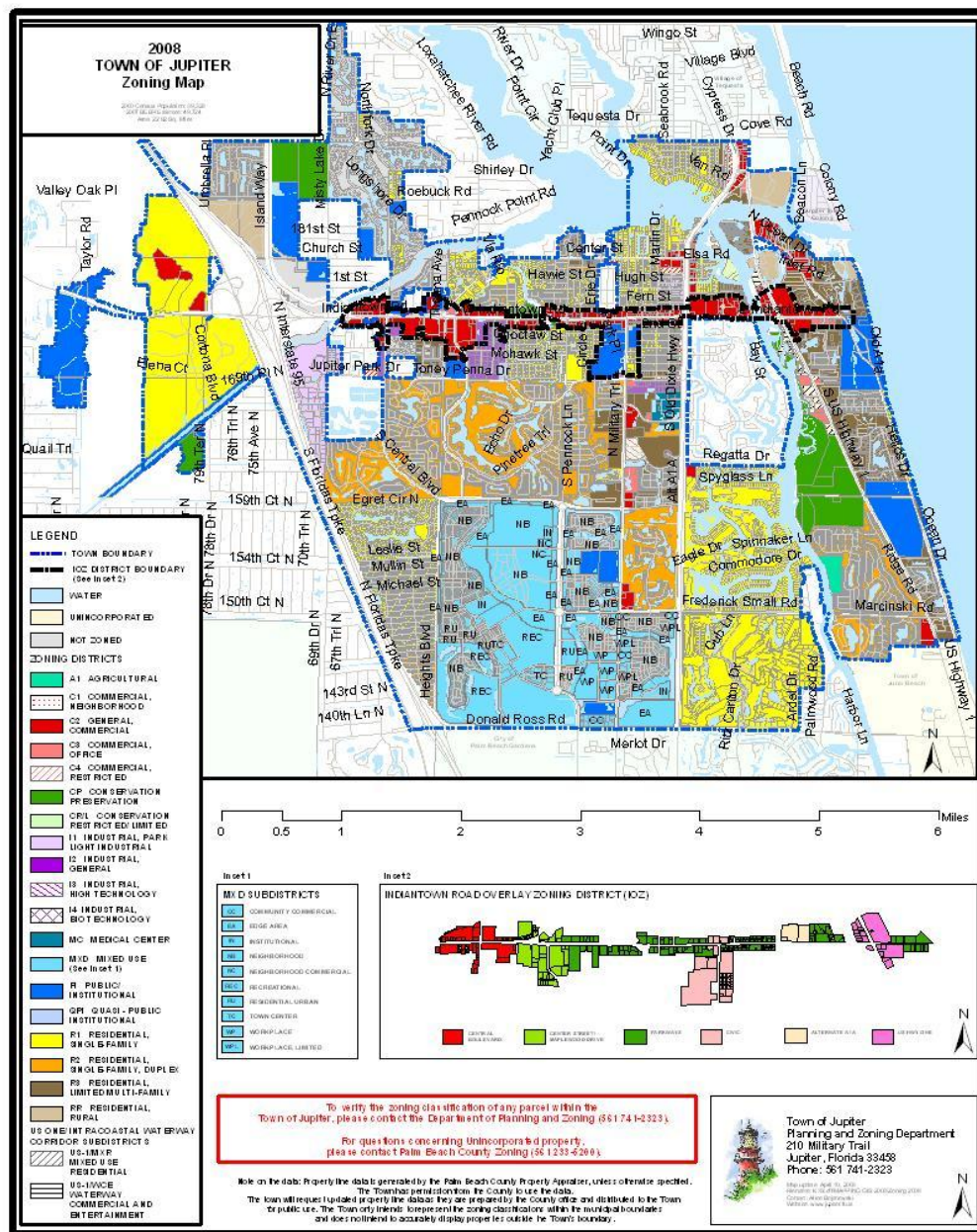
don't think it's fair.⁷¹

The legal barrier resonates with the residents of the community when it comes to social services or community maintenance projects and serves to further isolate Limestone Creek from the Town of Jupiter.



⁷¹ Patricia Smith, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 19 January 2009.

Figure 4 Jupiter, Florida and Unincorporated Limestone Creek⁷²



⁷² The Town of Jupiter. "2008 Zoning Map of Jupiter." *Planning and Zoning Resources: GIS Mapping*. 2009. <http://www.jupiter.fl.us/PlanningAndZoning/upload/Zoning-2008-smaller.jpg> (accessed January 20, 2009).

Limestone Creek's Reputation:

Since 1957, when West Jupiter became the official home for the African American residents of Jupiter, Limestone Creek has developed a notorious reputation as a low-income dangerous area of town. To this day, the perceived dangers of the community further isolate Limestone Creek from the surrounding Town of Jupiter. The residents of Limestone Creek and the Town of Jupiter have perpetuated this reputation, which has successfully evoked fear in neighboring communities and among the relatively few white residents of Limestone Creek. However, to the families who have lived in Limestone Creek since its inception the community is simply regarded as their home.

An example of a physical manifestation of this fear is a six foot tall fence erected between Limestone Creel and The Shores. The northern border of Limestone Creek shares a border with the south side of The Shores of Jupiter, a community developed in the late 1980's. The border between the two different communities is a six foot tall fence lined with barbed wire and one man-made lake. The residents of Limestone Creek acknowledge the fear felt by wealthier neighboring communities such as the Shores of Jupiter.

It is strange because I have lived here for three years and I don't feel unsafe... other than the manhunt on my street a few weeks ago... But it seems silly because people are afraid of us. But I guess it is understandable because those houses next to us are very expensive; only rich people can live there.⁷³

The type of homes and people found in Limestone Creek differ from those found in other neighboring communities (See Figure 1 page 13) and residents such as Caitlin Farinelli

⁷³ Caitlin Farinelli, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 29 January 2009.

are reminded of the supposed dangers lurking in her community by friends and family who live inside incorporated Jupiter. Limestone Creek has a reputation of having a high crime rate and is presumed to be an area you do not want to be in after dark. As Jupiter Farms resident Michele Chrupa notes, “I was always told that Limestone Creek and Kennedy Estates have a high crime rate...they tell you not to drive in there at night because of the robberies, stabbings and shootings...”⁷⁴ Jupiter Landings resident William McGovern also notes, “I had a lot of friends who went to Limestone Creek Elementary when I was younger and we would hear about how bad the community was.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Michele Chrupa, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 18 February 2009.

⁷⁵ William McGovern, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 20 February 2009.

Figure 5 Photograph of fence between The Shores and Limestone Creek⁷⁶



According to the residents of the community, Limestone Creek has a relatively recent history of being heavily populated by narcotic dealers and users in the early 1980's thus validating the negative reputation of the community. However, since the 1980's the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and Limestone Creek residents have instituted a neighborhood watch program which has helped lower the crime rates of the community.

Yeah it was a high crime drug area...shootings every night...and fights. And you could get anything you want just by going down the street. But it's calmed down a lot. My dad did the Volunteer Police Officer Crime watch program and they cleaned it up a lot. Got most of the drugs out and now there is just a few weed

⁷⁶ Jeremy DeChario, "Series 2 image # 3", Jupiter 2009.

places but nothing like it used to be.⁷⁷

As noted by Robert Tatum, during the last several decades residents have taken it upon themselves, with the help of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department, to rid the community of these illegal interlopers. The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department has increased its number of patrol cars and improved their response time to calls from Limestone Creek residents. Community residents themselves have initiated a neighborhood watch program, the Volunteer Police Officer Crime Watch Program that has enlisted the efforts of Limestone Creek community residents to patrol the area along with the Sheriff's Department and report criminal activity.⁷⁸

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department is responsible for patrolling Limestone Creek and promoting community safety and security but at times perpetuates the negative reputation of the community. Caitlin Farinelli is one of the relatively few white residents of Limestone Creek and notes:

...And actually a cop pulled me over...while I was walking...I was like um.. 'whats going on?' And he was like, 'what are you doin'?' and was like 'I'm going to the park. I'm going on a run.' It was about eight o'clock in the morning. Then he asked 'Are you going alone?' And I was confused because it's the park and he was there...⁷⁹

The reputation of Limestone Creek as a community to be feared comprised of residents who are dangerous, areas that are unsafe to be in after dark and drug-houses on every

⁷⁷ Robert Tatum, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 19 January 2009.

⁷⁸ Mathew Smith, Interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 19 January 2009. See also, Robert Tatum, Interviewed, by Sara M. Stout 19 January 2009.

⁷⁹ Caitlin Farinelli, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 29 January 2009.

corner perpetuates the isolation of the community and the need for the surrounding town to effectively confine the dangers into one area.

A community, a common identity: What happens now?

The residents of Limestone Creek recognize the dangerous reputation of their community and the palpable fear from neighboring communities however exaggerated or undeserved. But to the 569 residents, Limestone Creek is their home.⁸⁰ Since its conception in the early 1900's, Limestone Creek has prided itself on the shared heritage of the African American culture and its evolution since the forced segregation in 1957 has served to further bond the community together. As explained by Pastor Michael Maeweathers of the Mount Carmel Missionary Baptist Church, Limestone Creek "is a community that has not integrated into a multicultural area because of the common identity created by the black culture and the area's heritage and structures."⁸¹ The lack of integration in Limestone Creek bespeaks of the community's foundation of segregation and discrimination. However, the imminent concern of current day Limestone Creek today is to get funding in order to continue its plans for developing the infrastructure of the community. The only choices offered to the residents of Limestone Creek are to wait for Palm Beach County to allocate more funding to conclude the infrastructure project that stopped ten years ago, or incorporation into the Town of Jupiter. The experiences Limestone Creek has had with the Town of Jupiter from forced segregation to false promises of incorporation has left the residents of the community with an undermined the

⁸⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP-1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 Geographic Area: Limestone Creek CDP, Florida.

⁸¹ Pastor Michael Maeweather, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 23 February 2009.

faith in the Town of Jupiter, leading to negative opinions about their future relationship.

As Pastor Maeweathers states, "...it is not Jupiter. This is Limestone Creek. We are Limestone Creek."⁸² The structure of this community is different from the neighborhoods that surround Limestone Creek according to community residents. The reputation of Limestone Creek has been a crucial factor in keeping the Town of Jupiter from incorporating the community into its municipality, which, in some residents' opinions, at this point is all for the best. Robert Tatum, a resident of the Limestone Creek area from birth, has no intention of seeing his community incorporated into the Town of Jupiter:

Because, they...it's the rules and a lot of stuff they want to tell you about what color you can paint your house and if you can leave your car outside. All this and that...you know. If, like right now, I wanted to paint this place [indicates home] grey I would have to get permission to do it. You know, I pay the bills for the house... I'll paint it whatever color I want.⁸³

The reputation of the Town of Jupiter keeps many residents of Limestone Creek from pursuing incorporation, just as the negative reputation of Limestone Creek keeps many Jupiter residents outside of the community.

The community created out of segregation has been able to retain the community bonds that served to strengthen Limestone Creek throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. The heritage that Pastor Maeweather speaks about is what enables community members to band together to ask for funding for development since the 1980's, effectively lower crime rates during the 1990's and continue programs that

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Robert Tatum, interviewed by Sara Stout 19 January 2009.

find jobs for the homeless members of Limestone Creek in the twenty-first century. The community ties forged out of a history of racial discrimination helped Limestone Creek resident of three months, Mathew Smith found a home and a job in a community where he shares in the African American heritage

I've been homeless because I did some bad things...but I've been a lot of places and I've always been back here. And not just 'cause my daddy and sister are here but because I like it...it's my community. When I didn't want to be homeless anymore these people here helped me. I'm fifty-six, well I will be in a few months, but I'd never had what I have here. What I do is important. But I need these people. Its good for me to walk around and see so many black people all in one place. I'm never alone and it's time for a change and that's what it is here.⁸⁴

Limestone Creek is home to 569 residents, and many have lived in the area since 1957. The question now is 'what happens to the oldest black community in Jupiter?' Who is going to pay for the needed development of the infrastructure? Since the West Jupiter Community Group disbanded in the mid-1990's and the ending of the funds from Palm Beach County the development of the community has stopped. Limestone Creek is left with two options: petition Palm Beach County for more funding to finish the development project or find another source of funding. Another source of funding could be the Town of Jupiter if the municipality decides to incorporate the community.

According to the Planning and Zoning Department of Jupiter, incorporation first begins with a referendum, an option placed on the town ballot at the demand of the residents of the Town of Jupiter. For a referendum to be considered for the ballot, the town will assemble a team to determine cost analysis for the Town of Jupiter based on what additional developments need to be made to the area. The cost of incorporating Limestone Creek into the Town of Jupiter makes this community ideal for the Palm

⁸⁴ Matthew Smith, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 19 January 2009.

Beach County Workforce Housing Program adopted in 2006. Annexation into the Town of Jupiter would require the town to fund the development projects that are unfinished in Limestone Creek and the Workforce Housing Programs provides funds for development of housing and infrastructure of unincorporated or newly incorporated areas of Palm Beach County for people who work in jobs that “the general population of the community relies upon to make the community economically viable.”⁸⁵

The Long Range Planning and Zoning Department for the Town of Jupiter offered up the Workforce Housing Program as one of the only ways the Town of Jupiter could incorporate Limestone Creek. Workforce Housing would alleviate some of the financial burdens that would be placed on Jupiter if the town incorporated Limestone Creek and became responsible for developing the infrastructure of the community. The Workforce Housing program states that 7% of the homes in neighborhoods chosen for the Workforce Housing program need to be made economically attainable for people who make 50% less than the median household income of all of Palm Beach County. The median income for Palm Beach County is \$63,456, which is more than twice the median household income of Limestone Creek with is \$30,125.⁸⁶ Many residents of Limestone Creek fall below the 50% median household income of Palm Beach County and the developers of Workforce Housing would only build 7% of the homes for low income families making the program unfeasible and undesirable for the residents of Limestone Creek because the housing market for the community would no longer be affordable for its residents.

⁸⁵ Palm Beach County, “Workforce Housing.” Palm Beach County <http://pbcgov.com/hcd/programs/workforce.htm> (accessed January 21, 2009).

⁸⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP-1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 Geographic Area: Limestone Creek CDP, Florida.

The options for Limestone Creek residents to further develop the infrastructure of the community will either prove to be ineffective if Palm Beach County denies more funding or serve to further isolate Limestone Creek from the Town of Jupiter with the threat of making the community inaccessible to residents based on the tenets of the Workforce Housing Program. According to the Planning and Zoning Department of the Town of Jupiter, Jupiter is not currently pursuing annexation of the community because of “the expense to the town to conduct the whole annexation process.”⁸⁷

Conclusion:

Being the oldest African American community in Jupiter, Florida, Limestone Creek’s inception is traced back to the beginning of settlement for this area when the early settlers migrated south in search of work in the local industries. The history of the conception of Limestone Creek is not a proud history it is a community born out of racial discrimination. However, the history of this community continues to impact the residents in 2009 in the pride of the heritage that has emerged despite the negative conception of Limestone Creek. Over the decades the Town of Jupiter grew into a thriving municipality of Palm Beach County while Limestone Creek remained unincorporated, through existing within the planning and zoning boundaries of Jupiter. While the Town of Jupiter has experienced flourishing development of infrastructure, Limestone Creek is still in need of basic services. While race underlies all discussions of the incorporation of Limestone Creek into the Town of Jupiter, the more immediate issue is securing basic services and infrastructure for a community that has been left behind in the explosive growth of

⁸⁷ The Town of Jupiter Planning and Zoning Department, interviewed by Sara M. Stout, 18 February 2009.

northern Palm Beach County.

Limestone Creek is home to three generations of community activists who have worked to bring development into the community. During the 1980's, under the control of the West Jupiter Community Group, residents like Stephen Hunter began to push Palm Beach County for funding to introduce paved roads, sidewalks for the local elementary school, and water and sewer lines for the homes of the community. In the early 1990's the work of the West Jupiter Community Group brought into action a three phase development plan that would update the infrastructure of the community. A Task Force was assembled and the project began under the assumption that at the completion of the development phases the Town of Jupiter would incorporate Limestone Creek. In 1994, Palm Beach County called a halt to the Task Force and the three phase project because of lack of funding. The results of the incomplete project left Limestone Creek with only four streets of the community with access to water and sewer lines. Current day Limestone Creek suffers from the same lack of infrastructure and development as it did in 1994, with half-finished development projects leaving most of the community without basic services.

During the forced segregation in 1957, West Jupiter was viewed by whites as an ideal place for housing of Jupiter's African American population. It was removed from the valuable water-front property of east Jupiter and was underdeveloped compared the rest of the town. The underdevelopment of West Jupiter served as a physical barrier locking Limestone Creek residents into the community because of near impossible traveling conditions. By 2009, West Jupiter has flourished with the introduction of roads, Interstate 95, neighborhoods, and shopping centers surrounding the community.

Limestone Creek not only suffers from physical barriers but is also confined by a negative perception of this African American community by the surrounding Town of Jupiter. Limestone Creek is reputed as being a low income area suffering from the perceived maladies. Along with the physical barriers, the negative perception of Limestone Creek serves to further isolate the community and residents and reinforced a social barrier between the community and the surrounding Town of Jupiter.

While race underlies all discussions of the incorporation of Limestone Creek into the Town of Jupiter, the most immediate concern is securing basic services and infrastructure for a community that has been left behind in the explosive growth of northern Palm Beach County. The residents of Limestone Creek are left with few options to further improve the infrastructure of the community. The community is currently dependent upon Palm Beach County to allocate more funding to continue the development project of the mid-1990's which could prove ineffective or wait for the Town of Jupiter to incorporate the community into their municipality. While Limestone Creek is in a transition process developmentally, it has not lost the pride of being the oldest African American community in Jupiter, Florida.

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