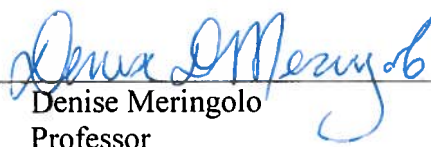


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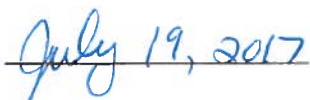
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## ABSTRACT

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MAPPING BALTIMORE ARABBERS

Sydney Jenkins, Master in Historical Studies,  
2017

Directed By:

Associate Professor, Denise D. Meringolo,  
Department of History.

This thesis follows the processes and research completed to create a public history project entitled, *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers*. The project is place-based public history, focusing on shared authority, community engagement, and advocacy. This thesis uses a broad lens to tell the history of the Baltimore Arabbers, and covers themes such as Baltimore's foodways, supermarket redlining, and racial discrimination.

# MAPPING BALTIMORE ARABBERS

By

Sydney Jenkins.

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Historical Studies  
2017

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the Arabbers of Baltimore. This is the first step to realizing a much larger vision, and I look forward to helping make it happen.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Denise Meringolo. Without your positive energy, and “real talks,” this would not have come to fruition. To Fruit and Moochie, without your stories and willingness to spend hours working with me, I would have lacked the ability to finish this project. To Holden Warren and Dan Van Allen, the amount of energy you volunteer leaves me in awe. I am forever grateful for your influence. I look forward to working alongside of you to both advocate for, and participate in, future historical and preservation projects. To my family (Mom, Dad, Sk, Sp, Sa, ADQ&M, Anna, G&P, J&J) for their constant support, encouragement, and aide in the most stressful of times. To Chelsea for acting as a sounding board on all things work, school, and life. To Justin for giving me your love, more patience than I deserve, and to both you and Ms. Katie for a physical space to finish. This process has tested the limits of my abilities and strengths, requiring lots of support from all of you mentioned. You have all stayed in my corner as my biggest cheerleaders, and that means so much.

Thank you.

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# Chapter 1: The Project

## Project Abstract

*Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* is a collaborative digital public history project designed to document the location of former and current Arabber stables and the markets where they purchased their wares. The project provides a visual representation of the Arabber's impact in Baltimore throughout the twentieth century, and preserves Arabbers stories and memories about their experiences. *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* is the foundation for a larger effort to collect, preserve, and interpret Arabber history.

## Defining Terms

“Arabbing” is a term that became popular in the twentieth century to describe street peddling in Baltimore. The term is unique to Baltimore and there is no clear evidence of when the name officially emerged. Some argue it is derived from a similar term used in London during the mid-1800's which described “the nomadic of London street gangs.”<sup>1</sup> The term, although used at the turn of the century, did not gain traction until street peddling became associated with African Americans and other “non-white” minorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Camp, “The Arabber's World,” introduction to *The Arabbers of Baltimore*, by Roland Freeman (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 1989), 6.

### Processing a Purposeful Project

As a public history project, *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* needed to be accurate, relevant to the Arabber community, and broadly accessible.<sup>2</sup> To accomplish these goals, I designed it as a collaborative project. Since the start of this project, I have worked with the members of the Arabber Preservation Society (APS), a nonprofit comprised of Arabbers, their families, and interested community members. Together, with APS members, we identified goals and the mission of the group. I designed a website meant to provide context to the goals and mission of the APS. I chose to document the stables because they serve as a physical representation of the Arabber's place in the city –physically, economically, and socially. These stables also played a significant role within the lives of the Arabbers. They were not only spaces where the Arabbers could “talk trade,” they were also places for sharing information and techniques. They are the foundation of the Arabber community. At the stables, Arabbers socialized with one another. They began and ended their long work days there. The stables also provided a safe space for many neighborhood children, drawn in by the horses. Roland Freeman, former Arabber, turned photographer, documentarian, and author of the book *The Arabbers of Baltimore*, recognized the value of the Arabber's stables. He dedicated an entire section to the happenings within the stables.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, Laura Koloski *Letting Go?: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World*. (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2011). Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*. (Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Roland Freeman, *The Arabbers of Baltimore*, (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 1989), 47.

I knew that best practices of public history meant collaborating with the community, but I wanted to review any existing sources to have a base knowledge before I reached out to potential partners.<sup>4</sup> Identifying written sources on the Arabbers, in general, was challenging but locating former Arabber stables proved extremely difficult. Many of the stables were small operations, owned and run by families or individual Arabbers, housing only a handful of horses. These smaller stables tended to change hands quickly, due to the transient nature of the job. It was also difficult to track down these stables because many of them existed within blighted areas of Baltimore, which were largely ignored by governmental records. In fact, in the mid-1960s, the Baltimore City Housing Department spent over three years attempting to track down a complete list of existing Arabber stables, and they were ultimately unsuccessful. Several Arabbers told me that there were tens of stables in east Baltimore alone, and yet after doing initial research, I could only find documentation of 16 of them across the entire city. I discovered that the collective and institutional knowledge held within the Arabber community was undoubtedly my best resource.

Urban landscape history, like the history of the Arabber's stables, has the healing ability to recognize and legitimize public memories. Dolores Hayden, author of *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, explains that studying public urban landscapes is beneficial to nurturing a sense of self: "...space(s) can help

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<sup>4</sup> National Endowment for the Humanities and the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media "Assess Resources and Content" worksheet on the "Planning a Digital Public History Project," *Doing Digital History*: 2016 <http://history2016.doingdh.org/week-2-tuesday/planning-a-digital-public-history-project/> (accessed June 2017)

to nurture this more profound, subtle, and inclusive sense of what it means to be an American.”<sup>5</sup> Hayden explains that urban renewal has obliterated important collective memories, and there is great value in “projects that are sensitive to all citizens and their diverse heritage, and developed with public processes that recognize both the cultural and the political importance of place.”<sup>6</sup> My desire to reclaim the Arabber’s history within these spaces stems directly from these ideas. Telling the whole story in the most impactful way is understanding that many of these shared memories were bulldozed down or built on top of. Recognizing that these experiences happened, and these memories existed can be impactful to both the current community, but also to the Arabbers and their families.

### Jumping In

To create a public history project with value to the Arabber community, I worked closely with the people who made and experienced this history. Community-based public history requires historians and the community to engage in shared authority throughout the storytelling process. Michael Frisch coined the phrase “shared authority” to describe best practices of public history. Hayden explained that when this type of balanced collaboration is done correctly, the interpretation is “grounded in culture and experience rather than academic expertise” and she continued, emphasizing that the redistribution of knowledge and power creates a

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<sup>5</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 9.

more meaningful sharing of understanding and experiences, and establishes that people, not academics, are the experts of their own past.<sup>7</sup> Using the Arabber's stories, I functioned largely as a mediator, to structure meaningful history around the idea that we all use the past to make sense of our lives.<sup>8</sup>

To better understand the needs and goals of the Arabbers, I began attending the Arabber Preservation Society (APS) meetings in the summer of 2012. The Arabber Preservation Society formed in the 1990s to ensure the continued existence of the historic trade. The society is made up of Baltimoreans, Arabbers, and their families. I participated within the Arabber community and the APS as a Baltimorean interested in the uniqueness of the Arabbers, but also as someone willing to lend a helping hand to organize events, plan projects, and write grants. Since the spring of 2016 I have served as secretary of the APS. As secretary, I wear many hats, but my most important role is to manage or co-manage projects related to the preservation of Arabber history and its trace on the city landscape. I have played a particularly large role in projects that require grant funding, and I have acted as a general advocate for the preservation of the Arabber trade. Also in the spring of 2016, the APS held a “dream session,” gather and record ideas and goals from stakeholders actively involved with the Arabbers. In attendance were the members of the APS executive board, active Arabbers, stable hands, and stable managers, as well as representatives from Baltimore City Animal Control, and the Maryland State Horse Industry Board. The dream session covered topics from partnering with local farmers markets, to

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<sup>7</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 48.

<sup>8</sup> Katharine T Corbett and Howard S. (Dick) Miller “A Shared Inquiry into Shared Inquiry” *The Public Historian* vol. 28 No. 1 (Winter 2006) 38.

adding a series of animal husbandry trainings with stables around the state, it also helped to steer the direction of historical preservation and the *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* project. Making sure that my project followed the goals of the Arabbing community was essential. Michael Frisch advocates for projects rooted in the needs and wants of the community, and warns that without this rootedness, a project will not resonate.<sup>9</sup>

*Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* also reflects my interest in public history's ability to aid community empowerment and community organizing. The mapping project specifically evolved out of the need to gather significant historical information and stories to support one of the APS members' most ambitious goal to transform the Fremont Avenue Stable, into an Arabber Discovery Center. As a discovery center, the stable and yard will function as a community and heritage space, while continuing to exist as a working stable. As a community space, the Arabber Discovery Center will host living history events, field trips, summer camps, pony rides, cooking demonstrations, animal therapy sessions, Arabber training courses, and monthly film screenings and guest speakers on topics of African American history, food security, and animal husbandry. In this capacity, the mapping project will jump start the discussions of historical memory interpreted in the space. Understanding that *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* began in this way, fulfills the goal that public historian Andrew Hurley attempts to accomplish with historic preservation projects "it not only invigorates local economies but strengthen communities by nurturing a deeper

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Frisch *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 249.

attachment to place, greater levels of social cohesion, and a collective agenda for local development.”<sup>10</sup>

When I first began planning this project, I was interested in reclaiming Baltimore’s streets as Arabber streets to present a visible and permanent representation of their impact within the community. I wanted to track the Arabber’s routes and mark the more frequented with a path of horses hoof marks painted on the street or sidewalk. After learning Arabber routes are not permanent, and that many factors can change the route of an individual Arabber, I knew I needed to tweak this idea. I was still interested in the idea of reclaiming space, so I shifted my focus to more specific Arabber spaces. The spaces I chose, their stables, are where the Arabbers spent time with other Arabbers, where they cared for their horse, and where they set up their wares in the wagon. The stables were not just a space for the Arabber horses, but for Arabber bonding and community.

### *Gathering Memories*

Interpreting the history of a living urban community required me to focus my efforts on empowering the community, amplifying its interests and goals by sharing authority and taking a dialogic interpretive approach. In addition to sharing authority during project planning, I also worked to share authority during the process of interpretation. The approach focuses on the history of the marginalized, which many times requires a wide array of sources, emphasizing the voice of those who

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<sup>10</sup>Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), ix.



experienced the history being told.<sup>11</sup> The history of the Arabbers has not been well-recorded, and their work has often been off the books, off the grid, and under the table. I based my researching style on the idea of the “dialogic museum.” This approach, which utilizes shared authority, is a narrative based entirely on diverse telling of the people who lived the history.<sup>12</sup> It was important to me that the stories presented came out of the memories of current and former Arabbers, because their perspectives have never been valued in the history of the city.

This kind of work is difficult, and typically takes shape through trial and error. My initial idea was to complete a series of formal oral histories to add to the recorded Arabber history, and to obtain stories from these stables. But I had difficulty completing these. I first reached out to Arabber, Fremont Avenue stable manager, and acting President of the Arabber Preservation Society, James “Fruit” Chase. We discussed my project, how it would help our overall goal, and with whom I should speak to obtain my information. He agreed to offer any information I needed and to connect me to the Arabbers who would be the most helpful for gathering information and telling stories.

My first oral history with James started late, ended early, and while it was informative and fun, it was not as formal as I had hoped. The oral history involved three parties, James “Fruit” with the knowledge, me with the questions, and Holden Warren (filmographer and documentarian) with the camera. When we finally sat

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<sup>11</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 49.

<sup>12</sup> John Kuo Wei Tchen and Liz Sevckenko “The ‘Dialogic Museum’ Revisited: A Collaborative Reflection,” in *Letting Go?: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2011), 83.

down at the yard to do the interview, it was the third time we had scheduled it, it was two hours later than we were supposed to start, and it was already getting dark. We decided to do the interview at the yard, because it made sense to be immersed in the place that James was talking about, but it meant that he was working. If James is at the yard, he is working. He was interrupted several times. We had an audience of stable hands who walked in and out, and while I was prepared with pages of questions, I was not prepared to be flexible enough and follow through with comments he made, or people he talked about. I left the process feeling pretty good about it until I listened to the recording, and realized that I had done a poor job. Benjamin Filene, director of Public History at University of North Carolina at Greensboro wrote about utilizing constraints to achieve successful oral histories. “... It may seem paradoxical, but limits—word counts, canvas boundaries, times limits—encourage free-form work.”<sup>13</sup> Although, it was a way to better my process, I found it difficult.

After my failed attempt at doing an oral history, I was disheartened. How was I supposed to be a public historian if I couldn’t do a basic oral history properly? I decided to try a different approach. My strengths, as a student within public history, do not lie within the formalities of academia, but in accepting that public history is not one size fits all. I decided that to have a more successful product, I needed to adapt my approach. The next three times I connected with the Arabbers, it was without an audience, it included walking or driving around, and the audio was recorded with my iPhone. These talks lasted for 30 minutes to 3 hours, but were much

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<sup>13</sup> Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, Laura Koloski *Letting Go?: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World*. (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2011), 10-11.

more personal and felt more like two people talking, rather than an interview. My next attempt to gather information will be to provide the Arabbers with a set of questions and either paper to write or a tape recorder to record their memories. Allowing the Arabbers to have time to think on their answers, will help them to create a more curated memory, which has the potential to be more effective than coming up with something off the top of their head. This process was a reminder that Public History, as a practice, requires someone willing to step back, reflect, reevaluate, and reassess, in regard to both goals and processes.<sup>14</sup>

### *Presenting the Project*

Once I began to organize the information I acquired, I needed a way to present it. I knew it would be digital, because I did not have grant funding to fabricate a physical interactive. I wanted to present these stories geographically as points on a map. I looked to other map based digital storytelling and public history projects for guidance. The “City of Memory” map presents memories experienced in New York City, and presented on a New York City map.<sup>15</sup> The stories presented are written by those who experienced them and the author can choose to include pictures or videos. The stories were interesting, but in many cases, were only loosely based on the places, and didn’t have any sort of broader context.

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<sup>14</sup> Rebecca Conard, “Public History As Reflective Practice: An Introduction,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 28 No. 1, Winter 2006; (pp. 9-13)

DOI: 10.1525/tph.2006.28.1.9

<sup>15</sup> Steve Zeitlin and Jake Barton, “City of Memory,” City Lore and MIT, <https://docubase.mit.edu/project/city-of-memory/> (accessed May 2017).

In 2013, I took a digital storytelling class. In this class, we partnered with Eli Pousson from Baltimore Heritage, a nonprofit based in Baltimore that dedicates its efforts to preservation and public history tours. Our partnership was to create content for “Explore Baltimore Heritage” a mapping project that they created and maintain.<sup>16</sup> This online map takes visitors to a map of Baltimore with pinpoints on it, each containing information, pictures, and videos of buildings and specific locations. The map is well organized, the stories are concise and clearly written. Each story is specifically about the building but also manages to tell a broader historical narrative. Additionally, “Explore Baltimore Heritage” grouped several of their locations thematically, to create virtual tours of Baltimore.

I based much of my project on Baltimore Heritage’s example, to tell a concise story, to have a clear and easy-to-use layout, to use as many pictures and videos available to me. But I wanted *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* to be more of a collaborative effort, promoting a shared authority with the Arabber community. I found a free website building site, [www.WIX.com](http://www.WIX.com). This sight allowed me to use an image of Baltimore and put points on top of the image. While the result was somewhat successful, the process was clunky and tedious. There were several times I spent hours tediously adding points to the map, with basic content and would return to find the information gone.

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<sup>16</sup> Baltimore Heritage, “Explore Baltimore Heritage,” <https://explore.baltimoreheritage.org/> (accessed March 2016)

### Future Goals

*Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* as it stands, is phase one of a more comprehensive project. Phase two will include historic photos and video clips of oral histories with Arabbers. It will also include a more cohesive way for community members to add their own stories of the Arabber stables to the map. The project will go on to aid the conclusion of several projects organized by the Arabber Preservation Society. One being a series of murals, installed across the city in places which formally existed as an Arabber stable. Using the information in *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers*, these muralists will create a publicly visible representation of one Arabber stable. The public art project will promote and enhance the online map by drawing broad public attention to the social history of place.<sup>17</sup> Some of the muralists will create their art alone, but in recognition of the fact that public art can be controversial and intrusive, we will make several of the murals more inclusive by inviting residents of the neighborhood to help plan and paint the piece.<sup>18</sup> These community designed murals will connect local people to the history of the Arabbers, drawing attention to the relevance of a specific past to the broader history of the neighborhood. We expect that themes may include decommercialization, food security, Baltimore's horse culture, or African American history. The goal of many public artists is similar to the goal of public historians, to resonate within the community and acquire a wider audience, have a greater impact, and allow the community to connect more deeply to

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<sup>17</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 52.

<sup>18</sup> Joanne Sharp, Venda Pollock, and Ronan Paddison "Just Art for a Just City: Public Art and Social Inclusion in Urban Regeneration," (*Urban Studies*, vol. 42 issue 5-6, 2016).

their home.<sup>19</sup> To further emphasize the historical background that inspired the murals, the murals will include an explanation of how to get to the *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* webpage. Within the site, visitors will be able to view the making of the murals as well as the mapping project to learn more. Funding for this project will require a grant. We have already taken steps to apply for a 2018 PNC Transformative Art grant.

Both the mapping and mural project will help to promote and add context to other projects the APS is working on. The *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* website will turn into an interactive for the Arabber Discovery Center. It will also help add content to a tabletop book focusing on the photography work of Holden Warren, vice president of the APS. It will serve as content for both the future discovery center and the grants needed to fund the discovery center.

#### *Why is This History Important?*

The Arabbers want to control their own history. Many people are unaware of the Arabbers continued existence. What is well-known, typically comes from newspaper articles focusing on the suspicion that the Arabber horses are poorly treated. My effort to interpret Arabber history through a dialogic method emphasizes

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<sup>19</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 67.

Cathy Stanton, "Outside the Frame: Assessing Partnerships between Arts and Historical Organizations" *The Public Historian*, Vol. 27 No. 1, Winter 2005; (pp. 19-37) DOI: 10.1525/tph.2005.27.1.19

their ownership of their own story, and amplifies their own words, stories, and experiences.<sup>20</sup>

Further, the Arabbers, and the community surrounding the last active stable, are struggling. The number of active Arabbers is small, the bills at the stable are high. The Arabbers are constantly trying to keep up with enforcement of old and new regulations regarding the housing of animals within the city. To help preserve the trade, it is important to remind city residents and officials about the Arabber's contributions to the community. The Arabber history projects can inspire interest in the trade, giving youth in the community a window into the value of entrepreneurship and problem solving. Similarly, the Arabber Discovery Center can provide jobs and promote partnerships between other entrepreneurs within the community.

Finally, Baltimore City's government is constantly coming up with studies and partnerships to solve issues related to food access across the city.<sup>21</sup> Juxtaposing the Arabber's map against the map of food deserts reveals the trade as a viable response to a historical problem with deep roots. Drawing attention to the Arabbers as entrepreneurs might inspire further studies connecting the decline of the Arabbers

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<sup>20</sup> John Kuo Wei Tchen and Liz Sevckenko "The 'Dialogic Museum' Revisited: A Collaborative Reflection," in *Letting Go?: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2011), 83.

<sup>21</sup> The Center for a Livable Future "Report: 1 in 4 Baltimore Residents Live in a Food Desert," Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health (June 10, 2015).

Baltimore City Planning "Baltimore City Food Desert Retail Strategy" <http://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/Baltimore%20City%20Food%20Desert%20Retail%20Strategy.pdf> (accessed June 2017).

Baltimore Food Policy Initiative, "Food Desert Incentive Area Personal Property Tax Credit," City's Department of Planning and Johns Hopkins Center for Livable Future. <http://baltimoredevelopment.com/incentives/tax-credits/food-desert> (accessed June 2017).

stables to the rise of food deserts in Baltimore. It will at least be a potential for future studies to consider the impact of the Arabbers and their ability to bring fresh produce to neighborhoods where fresh food is lacking.



## Chapter 2: The History

### Introduction

In the late nineteenth century street peddling was a common occupation in the United States. The popularity of street peddling as a viable job is explained by two speculative theories, both of which fit circumstances across the United States.<sup>22</sup> The first is known as the disadvantage theory, which “argues that exclusion from the labor market impels members of oppressed groups to become self-employed in marginal enterprises.”<sup>23</sup> As the result of competition and unfair hiring practices, many ethnic and racial minorities created their own jobs and became their own bosses. The second theory is known as the urban adjustment theory, which suggests ethnic minorities pursued self-employment to achieve economic stability as part of a larger effort to assimilate into American culture.<sup>24</sup> Both these theories still shape academic discussions of modern day street sellers. In Baltimore, street peddling evolved from similar historical conditions. During the twentieth century, it became a locally specific, African American tradition. Called “Arabbing,” street peddling in Baltimore became a means by which black people could achieve some economic independence

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<sup>22</sup> Robert L. Boyd, “Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century,” *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 1.

<sup>23</sup> Robert L. Boyd, “Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century,” *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 1.

<sup>24</sup> Robert L. Boyd, “Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century,” *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 1.

and demonstrate their ability to succeed in the context of an American culture that limited their opportunities.

### Street Peddlers

Although street peddling existed in the colonies and in early America, its most important history has roots in the late nineteenth century. As immigrants arrived in America from eastern and southern Europe, they encountered tremendous resistance.<sup>25</sup> Native born white Americans feared that the influx of immigrants would alter American values. Immigrants with darker complexion or features were referred to as “temporary Negroes,” “not-yet-white,” and “off-white,” “...new immigrants often existed between nonwhiteness and full inclusion as whites...”<sup>26</sup> This racial hierarchy meant that new immigrants experienced daily prejudices.

While many were drawn to the United States with the promise of high paying industrial jobs, they encountered a job market that was not friendly to non-white workers and jobs that were dangerous and difficult. Historian David Roediger delved into the racial tensions that existed as immigrants poured into the country, explaining that race, determined your worth within society, as well as your access to rights and decent jobs.<sup>27</sup> In response to prejudices that kept them out of the most lucrative jobs, many of these “new immigrants” entered into the “small-scale entrepreneurial” job

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<sup>25</sup> David Roediger *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 11.

<sup>26</sup> David Roediger *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 13.

<sup>27</sup> David Roediger *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 14.

market.<sup>28</sup> Street peddling was one of the most common options. One in ten New York City immigrants were peddlers in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.<sup>29</sup> Street peddling enabled immigrants to achieve some independence and to serve diverse communities who might otherwise lack access to healthy food. Street peddling allowed these new immigrants a certain level of clout amongst their marginalized peers.<sup>30</sup>

Street peddling also became common in Baltimore because of the unique circumstances of the city's development. Baltimore grew very rapidly at the turn of the nineteenth century, taking the spot of the third largest city in America.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century new immigrants and African Americans flocked to Baltimore in hopes of acquiring a job in the thriving city. Instead they found an unstable job market based on exploitation and abuse based on racism and discrimination.<sup>32</sup> Wealthy employers, empowered by the early republic capitalism, "constantly adjust[ing] their workforces shifting between and combining laborers

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<sup>28</sup>John Gaber, "Manhattan's 14<sup>th</sup> Street Vendors' Market, Informal Street Peddlers' Complementary Relationship with New York City's Economy." *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 23, no. 4 (1994): 2.

<sup>29</sup> Robert L. Boyd, "Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century," *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 2.

<sup>30</sup> Robert L. Boyd, "Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century," *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 1.

<sup>31</sup> Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>32</sup> Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 4.

who were enslaved, indentured, and free...”<sup>33</sup> Thus, street peddling has remained an option for desperate laborers, a form of resistance against an exploitative system, and method of giving agency back to the laborer.

### Public Markets

Baltimore’s food distribution system has always been distinct. Even before Baltimore was a sanctioned city, its residents’ reliance on public markets was great. While other cities had public markets, few had as many as Baltimore. By the turn of the twentieth century, Baltimore could boast ten public markets and one wholesale distribution center, which also served as a fish market.<sup>34</sup> Not only were they a pillar of the community, Baltimore’s public markets were run and managed by the city, so all revenue from the vendors’ monthly stall rentals went to the government.<sup>35</sup>

With so much official support for public markets, many entrepreneurs believed they were the key to both significant income and to ensuring food accessibility.<sup>36</sup> However, in 1913 a nationwide survey was completed by the American Academy of Political and Social Science, highlighting the status of the public markets in cities across the country as a means to reducing the cost of food.

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<sup>33</sup> Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 8.

<sup>34</sup> John W. Farley, “A Questionnaire on Markets.” *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 140-141.

<sup>35</sup> James F. Thrift and William T. Childs, “Baltimore’s Markets.” *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 120.

<sup>36</sup> James F. Thrift and William T. Childs, “Baltimore’s Markets.” *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 121.

The survey challenged the optimistic view of Baltimore's markets. The city was not making money from its public market ventures. In fact, it was costing the city money to operate them. Baltimore officials admitted they were unsure of best practices for successful markets, but they restated their commitment to them. Mostly, they were interested in turning a profit.<sup>37</sup> Members of Baltimore's government, determined to make the markets successful, encouraged the farmer-consumer relationship by establishing zero taxes, charges, or annual fees on these markets.<sup>38</sup>

To add to Baltimore's problems of making a successful public market system, public markets across the country had a rather negative public as places troubled by criminal activity, danger, and the lower class of people. Wealthier folks sent their servants to do the shopping.<sup>39</sup> Despite the negative view that public markets were dangerous, Baltimore continued to support its public markets, discouraging retail stores from opening.<sup>40</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century Baltimore was one of the least expensive cities in the United States, an image Baltimore wished to maintain.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> James F. Thrift and William T. Childs, "Baltimore's Markets." *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 122.

<sup>38</sup> James F. Thrift and William T. Childs, "Baltimore's Markets." *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 123.

<sup>39</sup> Tracey Deutsch, *Building a Housewife's Paradise: Gender, Politics, and American Grocery Stores in the Twentieth Century*. (University of North Carolina Press: 2010), 27.

<sup>40</sup> James F. Thrift and William T. Childs, "Baltimore's Markets." *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 123.

<sup>41</sup> James F. Thrift and William T. Childs, "Baltimore's Markets." *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 127.

The idea that public market products were less expensive than any certified retailer was emphasized, and helped the popularity of the markets.<sup>42</sup>

### Public Markets and Hucksters

The popularity of the public markets directly affected the success of hucksters in Baltimore. The fact that the government was committed to the success of the public markets meant that street peddlers were seen as a threat to the financial stability of city government.<sup>43</sup> Their efforts not only threatened public revenue, they also reduced the already small profits made by farmers who rented stalls and relied on public markets to sell their food. In response to complaints from the public market vendors, and clearly also serving the needs of the city, Baltimore's government passed a series of laws designed to control the hucksters and limit their influence.<sup>44</sup> As early as 1807, Baltimore had passed a law forcing people vending from the streets to use tables or baskets, as opposed to walking or using a mule or horse. This forced hucksters to pay a vending fee and to become part of the public market rather than branching out as independent sellers.<sup>45</sup> The government even made selling fruits and candles outside of public markets illegal. They imposed fines on many hucksters,

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<sup>42</sup> John W. Farley, "A Questionnaire on Markets." *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 145.

<sup>43</sup> John W. Farley, "A Questionnaire on Markets." *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 148.

<sup>44</sup> James F. Thrift and William T. Childs, "Baltimore's Markets." *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 124.

<sup>45</sup> Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 127-128.

who, in turn, gathered to protest.<sup>46</sup> In 1826, Baltimore approved a law that forced a licensing tax on the hucksters.<sup>47</sup>

The hucksters developed creative responses to these restrictions in order to continue selling fruits and vegetables from the street. Across the country, their strategies were met with suspicion. William Waldron the Superintendent of the Department of Weights and Measures in Trenton NJ, wrote about his effort to enforce standards and stabilize the cost of living. His report included a cautionary section titled, “Hucksters Should be Watched.” He accused street peddlers of dishonesty, recording an example of hucksters hiding heavy objects at the bottoms of large produce bags to sell their produce for more money. “This trick is a favorite with hucksters and produce men, but they escape detection by operating quickly out of range of the buyer... Hucksters claim to sell cheaper, but the apparent reduction is made up by giving short weight and short measure [claiming more produce than there actually is].”<sup>48</sup> Waldron warned housewives stay away from hucksters for fear of getting scammed. His department staff was legally able to stop any huckster at any time in order to weigh or count his pre-packaged bags and boxes of produce to make sure that the huckster sold them at the correct quantity for the right price. “If the measures [their produce] have been sealed they are allowed to continue their operations; but if the measures have not... they are tested without further delay. More

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<sup>46</sup> Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 100.

<sup>47</sup> Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 128.

<sup>48</sup> William L Waldron, “Effect of the New Jersey Department of Weights and Measures on the Cost of Living.” *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 88.

than one huckster has had occasion...as any equipment [wares they are selling]in use found short of standard is at once confiscated.”<sup>49</sup> As hucksters fought against fines and protested new laws, they were portrayed as deceptive criminals.<sup>50</sup>

Despite their negative image, constant attention from law and code enforcement officers, and high fees and fines, there were advantages to street peddling that public markets could not reproduce. Hucksters could move from street to street, providing an element of convenience to Baltimoreans who were shut in, or without means to travel. Furthermore, during the 1910s, hucksters obtained their produce from the same supplier from which the public food markets obtained theirs. This most likely allowed the two parties to sell their wares at the same price, further fueling competition.<sup>51</sup>

### Arabbers in the twentieth Century

Many historians describe 1910 as the beginning of the phenomenon known as the “Great Migration.” Between 1910 and 1940 “the percentage of African Americans living in urban areas increased markedly, from 27% to 44%.”<sup>52</sup> But Baltimore’s

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<sup>49</sup> William L Waldron, “Effect of the New Jersey Department of Weights and Measures on the Cost of Living.” *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 88.

<sup>50</sup> Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 128.

<sup>51</sup> James F. Thrift and William T. Childs, “Baltimore’s Markets.” *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 119.

<sup>52</sup> Robert L. Boyd, “Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century,” *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 7.



African American residents made up a significant percentage of the city's population even before the beginning of the migration. By 1900, 79,000 black people lived in Baltimore, "giving the city the nation's second-largest black community after Washington, D.C." By the beginning of the migration, the number of black residents had "swelled to nearly 85,000, 15.5 percent of the city's total."<sup>53</sup> African Americans were seeking asylum from violent discrimination in the Jim Crow South. "They were fleeing a world where they were restricted to the most menial of jobs, underpaid if paid at all, and frequently barred from voting. Between 1880 and 1950, white mobs lynched more than one African-American person per week for some perceived breach of the racial hierarchy."<sup>54</sup> African Americans continued to migrate into American cities, in both the North and the South, through the pre-WWII era. Prior to the Great Migration, European immigrants had dominated the peddling trade, along with most assembly line and factory jobs. But World War I slowed European immigration creating a labor shortage in the North.<sup>55</sup> As increasing numbers of black migrants arrived in Baltimore, racial dynamics became increasingly hostile and black people worked to become as independent as possible. Through a variety of entrepreneurial

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<sup>53</sup> Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield 2001), 16.

<sup>54</sup> Isabel Wilkerson "The Long-Lasting Legacy of the Great Migration" Smithsonian Magazine, online September 2016 <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/long-lasting-legacy-great-migration-180960118/> (accessed June 2017).

<sup>55</sup> Isabel Wilkerson "The Long-Lasting Legacy of the Great Migration" Smithsonian Magazine, online September 2016 <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/long-lasting-legacy-great-migration-180960118/> (accessed June 2017).

projects black Americans attempted to create the best living environment possible within a society that continually tried to limit their freedom<sup>56</sup>

Whites resisted African American efforts to integrate city life. The Baltimore City government passed legislation to marginalize black citizens economically, geographically, and politically.<sup>57</sup> “Democratic Party leaders tried to disenfranchise blacks... [and] the Grand Old Party requires that African Americans be seated separately at party functions to ease the anxieties of the white members.”<sup>58</sup> Baltimore was the first American city to successfully pass city-wide residential housing bill in 1910, serving as a model for the rest of the country to follow.<sup>59</sup>

In the 1930s and 1940s, as a partial response to these conditions, more African American men joined the street peddling trade.<sup>60</sup> In general, African American street peddlers were more populous in southern cities compared to the percentage of African American peddlers in northern cities. In the 1930s and 1940s there were twice as many African American peddlers in the South than in the North.<sup>61</sup> Baltimore

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<sup>56</sup> Phillips, Christopher. *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 154.

<sup>57</sup> Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield 2001), 16.

<sup>58</sup> Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield 2001), 16.

<sup>59</sup> Antero Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City*, (Rowman & Littlefield: 2012), 22.

<sup>60</sup> Robert L. Boyd, “Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century,” *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 7.

<sup>61</sup> Robert L. Boyd, “Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century,” *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 10.

had one of the highest percentages of African American street peddlers.<sup>62</sup> There are two likely causes for the high percentage of African American street peddlers in Baltimore. First, that street peddling was more prevalent in cities with insufficiently diversified economies.<sup>63</sup> Second, immigrants from European decent were mostly moving to north eastern and Midwestern cities, which created competition in the North for even the lowest paying industrial jobs.<sup>64</sup> By 1940, there were 187 recorded African American men hawking on the streets of Baltimore, a large portion of the total hucksters on the streets.<sup>65</sup> Although the Arabbers were performing the same tasks, purchasing from the same wholesale markets, and subjected to similar criminalization, Arabbing was a trade of its own established by African Americans as a direct response to the specific, restrictive, racial dynamics within Baltimore.

### Mid-Century Arabbing

By the middle of the twentieth century, the nature of food purchasing had changed. Fewer residents traveled to the public markets. They preferred more convenient, local access to food. Housewives began relying more heavily on both

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<sup>62</sup> Robert L. Boyd, "Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century," *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 10.

<sup>63</sup> Robert L. Boyd, "Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century," *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 16.

<sup>64</sup> Robert L. Boyd, "Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century," *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 17.

<sup>65</sup> Robert L. Boyd, "Urbanization, Disadvantage and Petty Entrepreneurship: Street Peddling among African American Men in Southern and Northern Cities during the Early Twentieth Century," *Sociological Inquiry* 69, issue 2, (1999): 9.

street peddlers and on emerging independent grocery stores.<sup>66</sup> In this atmosphere, Arabbers and independent stores competed with one another. Although they were both more convenient and reliable, consumers perceived them in significantly different ways. Independent groceries were described as “a deeply institutionalized element of American economic and social life, ingrained in the prevailing concept of community, and a key link in the opportunity structure that was then seen as a foundation of American democracy.”<sup>67</sup> Independent stores were positive, impactful, pillars of the community, taking over a position once held by the public food markets. Arabbers, in contrast, were not seen in a positive light, as a lucrative trade. It is probable that this dichotomy was shaped by racial prejudices. Whatever the case, neither the independent grocers nor the Arabbers could command the food market permanently.

### Grocery Stores and Food Desserts

Independent grocers and their loyal customers were threatened by the rise of the chains. Opponents argued that they disrupted the uniqueness of cities, making each one look the same.<sup>68</sup> Several states attempted to limit chains’ power by imposing regulations. Maryland was the second state to attempt to pass anti-chain

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<sup>66</sup> Alan M. Kraut, “The Butcher, The Baker the Pushcart Peddler: Jewish Foodways and Entrepreneurial Opportunity in the East European Immigrant Community 1880-1940,” *The Journal of American Culture*, volume 6, issue 4 (Winter 1983).

<sup>67</sup> Paul Ingram and Hayagreeva Rao, “Store Wars: The Enactment and Repeal of Anti-Chain-Store Legislation in America,” *American Journal of Sociology*, volume 110, issue 2 (2004), 447.

<sup>68</sup> Daniel Scroop, “The Anti-Chain Store Movement and the Politics of Consumption,” *American Quarterly* volume 60, no. 4 (2008), 925.

store legislation. The legislation proposed a licensing fee for chains owning more than five stores. It passed, but was quickly challenged by chain store owners, and ruled unconstitutional in 1928.<sup>69</sup> For close to a decade, this trend continued: communities and business owners threatened by chain stores attempted to limit their impact, but all attempts to pass regulation or fees were eventually declared unconstitutional. In 1936, a piece of national legislation entitled the Robinson-Patman Act, often called the “Anti A&P law” was proposed.<sup>70</sup> Again, the act was meant to tax individual stores, and although it was unable to pass nationally, efforts to limit the influence of the chains at the state level began to win support. Between 1931 and 1939, 27 states, including Maryland successfully passed legislation to tax chain stores based on the number of stores they owned and managed.<sup>71</sup>

After a decade of expanding within urban areas, chain stores responded to the anti-chain store movement by abandoning smaller markets. As early as the 1930s, with the onset of the anti-chain store movement and rumors of new taxation policies, hundreds of chain stores closed. In fact, A&P, the largest chain in America, closed more than 300 of its stores in 1930 and 1931 nationwide.<sup>72</sup> After abandoning their

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<sup>69</sup> J. Edward Collins “Anti-Chain Store Legislation” *Cornell Law Review*, volume 24, issue 2 (February 1939): 198.

<sup>70</sup> Elizabeth Eisenhauer, “In Poor Health: Supermarket Redlining and Urban Nutrition.” *GeoJournal*, volume 53 (2001), 127. This law would have prevented wholesalers from unfairly charging different prices to retailers. The law also attempted to tax the number of stores owned by a chain.

<sup>71</sup> Paul Ingram and Hayagreeva Rao, “Store Wars: The Enactment and Repeal of Anti-Chain-Store Legislation in America,” *American Journal of Sociology*, volume 110, issue 2 (2004), 447.

<sup>72</sup> Tracey Deutsch, *Building a Housewife’s Paradise: Gender, Politics, and American Grocery Stores in the Twentieth Century*. (University of North Carolina Press: 2010), 138.

smaller and less-successful branches, chain store companies focused their efforts on expanding existing stores, and building new, larger stores.

By the 1940s, then, American chains stores were moving out of cities and into the more spacious and sprawling suburbs. These quickly expanding suburbs were promoted as the way to live out the “American Dream.”<sup>73</sup> Eager to expand the businesses within their communities, suburbs offered incoming businesses cheap prices on land, and could do so thanks to the massive amount of government funding provided to large-scale suburban developers in the mid-1940s.<sup>74</sup> With more square footage available to them in the suburbs, chain stores were built larger and with larger parking lots. Chain stores continued to leave urban areas for the benefits of the suburbs throughout the twentieth century. Unfortunately, they left a massive need in their wake. Their initial success wiped out much of their competition, and so leaving for the suburbs left urban families without adequate access to food.

During this same period, black Baltimoreans were experiencing a very different series of circumstances. Thanks to the GI Bill, a government sponsored program, suburban living became more accessible to white families.<sup>75</sup> The GI Bill is credited to have started America’s middle class and promoted the success of the suburbs.<sup>76</sup> But active racial discrimination in the real estate and mortgage lending

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<sup>73</sup> Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 37.

<sup>74</sup> Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 16.

<sup>75</sup> Bernadette Kristine Buchanan Mencke, “Education, Racism, and the Military: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of the GI Bill and its Implications for African Americans.” (PhD. Diss., Washington State University, 2010), 22.

<sup>76</sup> Juan F. Perea “Doctrines of Delusion: How the History of the G.I. Bill and Other Inconvenient Truths Undermine the Supreme Court’s Affirmative Action

industries made the benefits of the GI Bill inaccessible to black American families. These families became increasingly isolated in urban areas with a declining tax base and dwindling services.<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps ironically, even as the city's population became more black than white, most businesses engaged in active discrimination against black people, both as customers and as potential employees. Black Baltimoreans organized protests and boycotts to end racist hiring practices within retail spaces. This movement, known as the "Buy Where You Can Work Campaign," impacted the grocery store industry, because it focused attention on white-stores like A&P that depended on black customers but refused to hire black people. A young Baltimorean, Evelyn Burrell was part of a large-scale protest outside of her local A&P. She described the scene: "Tuesday, November 21, the stores were practically closed down because, believe it or not, we had young people going from door to door, acquainting people. We had trucks and loudspeakers going all around the neighborhood. People really were not going in the stores. Consequently, the stores were hurting. I mean hurting."<sup>78</sup> A regional director came to Baltimore and made a deal with protest organizers, "promising to hire 21 Black clerks within 2 weeks, to continue hiring Blacks until 'every boy is colored,' and to have three Black managers in place by March 1,

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Jurisprudence," *University of Pittsburgh Law Review*, volume 75 (Summer 2014), 585.

<sup>77</sup> Bernadette Kristine Buchanan Mencke, "Education, Racism, and the Military: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of the GI Bill and its Implications for African Americans." (PhD. Diss., Washington State University, 2010), 5.

<sup>78</sup> Gloria Aull, interview by Helen Szablya, January 13, 1982, transcript, Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project, University of Baltimore, Box 2, Folder 76.

1934.”<sup>79</sup> The A&P stood by their word. However, the chain also continued to close stores within Baltimore, partly in response to the protests and partly because suburban stores were more profitable. Overtime, these conditions further limited access to fresh foods in many Baltimore neighborhoods.

### Food Scarcity

By the 1960s, while the term was not yet used, Baltimore had become a food desert. The success of supermarket chains had, as many independent grocers predicted, pushed small stores out of business. Then, as the white middle class moved into the suburbs after WWII, the chains followed, leaving many city neighborhoods without access to fresh food. Cities across the country faced similar issues, inspiring national studies, led by social scientists, to identify the cause and suggest cures for food in urban neighborhoods.<sup>80</sup> The studies came to two major conclusions. First, urban corner stores stocked lower quality items and sold them at the same price as the higher quality food found in larger suburban grocery stores.<sup>81</sup> One study gave an example, “the vegetables and fruits were shriveled and bruised. Flies were also observed around unsprayed produce sections.”<sup>82</sup> Second, the majority of lower income families in the city were without cars. If they wanted access to supermarkets,

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<sup>79</sup> Gloria Aull, interview by Helen Szablya, January 13, 1982, transcript, Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project, University of Baltimore, Box 2, Folder 76.

<sup>80</sup> Donald E. Sexton Jr., “Comparing the Cost of Food to Blacks and Whites—A Survey.” *Journal of Marketing* volume 35 issue 3, (July 1971).

<sup>81</sup> Donald E. Sexton Jr., “Comparing the Cost of Food to Blacks and Whites—A Survey.” *Journal of Marketing* volume 35 issue 3, (July 1971) 45.

<sup>82</sup> Burton H. Marcus, “Similarity of Ghetto and Non-Ghetto Food Costs,” *Journal of Marketing Research*, volume 6, (August 1969), 367.



they typically relied on taxis, adding an additional cost to their food budget. While many used public transportation for this purpose, this was time consuming and inconvenient.<sup>83</sup> None of these studies took seriously the impact of street peddlers, like the Arabbers. The Arabbers provided an opportunity for Baltimore residents to access fresh food.

### *The Anti-Arabber Bill of 1966*

The city of Baltimore also seems to have failed to consider the Arabber's value. In 1966, the Baltimore City government passed a health ordinance calling for the removal of stables from densely populated areas. Enforcement of the law threatened the Arabber's livelihoods and put many neighborhoods at risk of losing access to fruits and vegetables. The bill emphasized the stables as a danger to health and the animals as a nuisance. But went as far as to blame the Arabbers for Baltimore's blighted neighborhoods. It read:

No. 895 (Council No. 1698): An ordinance requiring the removal of stables for housing of horses, mules, colts, or other animals of the horse or mule family, now existing in any Use District, within 300 feet measured in a straight line to the next boundary line of any public playground, or to any building or structure used as a church, orphanage, school, hospital, theatre or motion picture theatre, or any building used as a residence in the City of Baltimore not later than September 1, 1969; and providing a certain exception to these provisions....the maintenance of stables for the housing of horses, creates a health menace to the people of our City and is detrimental to their welfare...stables tend to depreciate the value of public and private property...residential neighborhoods are now blighted

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<sup>83</sup> Phyllis Groom, "Prices in Poor Neighborhoods." *Monthly Labor Review*, 2506 (1966).

or threatened with blight by the continued maintenance of stables...[cannot keep your property if it is] detrimental to his neighbors.<sup>84</sup>

To properly enforce this regulation, the City's Department of Zoning needed a list of Arabber stables. At the time, there was no such list, because the Arabbers operated outside of regular business practices. Many practiced without a business license and used a variety of structures as stables. Therefore, although the bill was passed, it proved to be unenforceable because the location of stables was difficult to know for certain. The city relied on a variety of informants, including the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MdSPCA). Officers from the Zoning Department asked for the organization's assistance in identifying stables.<sup>85</sup> The group provided zoning officials with a list of 15 locations, building owners, and home addresses of the owners.<sup>86</sup> The Sanitary Services of the City Health Department used the list provided and make an official round of inspections.<sup>87</sup>

One stable location was added to the Zoning Department's list in a letter from the Chief of Renewal Area Operations. He explained that there was an Arabber stable which was not on the city's list, at 1214-1244 North Gay Street, and that his department had received complaints regarding this stable. The chief explained that he

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<sup>84</sup> Ordinance no. 895, Baltimore City government, council no 1698

<sup>85</sup> Letter, David M. Stewart to Mr. Franklin W Aschemeier Jr., September 3, 1969, box 8, folder 4, Collection BRG48, Administrative Files, Neighborhood Development Division, Baltimore City Archives.

<sup>86</sup> "Licensed Stables in the City of Baltimore, Md.," The Maryland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, September 3, 1969, box 8, folder 4, Collection BRG48, Administrative Files, Neighborhood Development Division, Baltimore City Archives.

<sup>87</sup> Letter, George W. Schucker to Mr. Franklin W. Aschemeier Jr., September 12, 1969, box 8, folder 4, Collection BRG48, Administrative Files, Neighborhood Development Division, Baltimore City Archives.

would appreciate if its closing be a primary concern for the Zoning Department's enforcements. He did not mention who wrote the complaints, or what they entailed. He just wanted it closed.<sup>88</sup> Two weeks after the letter was received, the Zoning Department created a new list of stables, including the stable mentioned by the chief, as well as updated addresses for several of the stables on the previous list.<sup>89</sup>

The law was also difficult to enforce because it did not provide a clear line of authority on which agencies were required to identify and shut down the stables. Near the end of October 1969, after spending nearly two months gathering information on the Arabbers, a city commissioner wrote to Judge Russell, a city solicitor, and asked for clarification on this matter<sup>90</sup> By October 24<sup>th</sup>, the date of the correspondence, termination notices had been delivered to twenty-six locations.<sup>91</sup>

Confusion continued around the enforcement of the bill, and three days later the city hosted a meeting for Baltimore City government representatives, neighborhood improvement association representatives, as well as Arabber stable owners and operators. While there are no minutes from this meeting, according to a letter to the Zoning Enforcement Officer, the Arabbers in attendance reviewed the city's list of stables and found that several were missing, and asked for another way to

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<sup>88</sup> Letter, John M. Dupont to Franklin W. Aschemeier Jr., October 31, 1969, box 8, folder 4, Collection BRG48, Administrative Files, Neighborhood Development Division, Baltimore City Archives.

<sup>89</sup> "Stables Operating after September 1, 1969 apparently in violation of Ordinance 895," November 28, 1966, box 8, folder 4, Collection BRG48, Administrative Files, Neighborhood Development Division, Baltimore City Archives.

<sup>90</sup> Letter, R. C. Embry, Jr. to Honorable George L. Russell, Jr., "Ordinance No. 895, Approved November 28, 1966 – Stables," October 24, 1969, box 8, folder 4, Collection BRG48, Administrative Files, Neighborhood Development Division, Baltimore City Archives.

<sup>91</sup> In no list found in the archives were there 26 separate locations. I believe they sent out several for certain stables because they were unsure of the official address.

acquire a more complete list of stables so that they could “most accurately know the dimensions of our problem?”<sup>92</sup>

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1969 the Baltimore Sun published an article discussing the matter. It was titled “Stable Law Changes; Enforcement Not Near.”<sup>93</sup> The article discussed the city’s decision to better enforce the ordinance, but claimed that, according to the ordinance regulations, only two stables were affected by this ordinance. It is never said whether this journalist attended the meeting, but the timing seems to suggest that they may have. If that is the case, it is possible that the city explained to the group of Arabbers and stable owners that the ordinance would not affect many of them. And yet, if the ordinance was enforced, nearly every Arabber stable from the city’s list would be shut down. Baltimore City’s government was well aware of the fact that the ordinance would affect close to all of the stables, as shown from a letter from George W Schucker, the Assistant Commissioner of Health Sanitary Services, to Franklin W Aschemeier Jr., Zoning Enforcement Officer, which listed the effected stables “in violation” of the ordinance.<sup>94</sup> If, in fact, the public knew this ordinance would shut down nearly every Arabber stable, it is possible the public and the community of Arabbers would have joined forces and rallied against the bill more effectively.

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<sup>92</sup> Letter, Franklin W Aschemeier, Jr. to W. Sanderson, Jr., “Stables—Locations—Owners’ Addresses,” October 20, 1969, box 8, folder 4, Collection BRG48, Administrative Files, Neighborhood Development Division, Baltimore City Archives.

<sup>93</sup> Sue Dinges “Stable Law Changes; Enforcement Not Near” *The Morning Sun*, October 28, 1969.

<sup>94</sup> “Stables Operating after September 1, 1969 apparently in violation of Ordinance 895, approved,” November 28, 1966, box 8, folder 4, Collection BRG48, Administrative Files, Neighborhood Development Division, Baltimore City Archives.

The Zoning Commission wrote a letter to city Council requesting an extension of the bill. The original date for the bill was no later than September 1, 1969, considering that date had passed, City Council granted them an extension to September 1972.<sup>95</sup> Although there was no explanation for the reasoning of the extension, it can be assumed that the city realized the extent of the situation, and the extreme lack of information they had. Once the extension was granted there was no further information of additional inspections, no records of inquiries about additional addresses, no concerted effort from the government at all. It appears the extension allowed Baltimore City to once again ignore the Arabbers existence.

The Arabbers were in a difficult position. On one hand, while the bill was unenforced, they could continue their work. Over time, they gained recognition as a symbol of Baltimore in newspapers, books, and magazines. At the same time, their effort and ongoing work in the city was in violation of Ordinance 895. The city essentially allowed the stable to be shut down by neglect. Developers acquired land occupied by Arabbers and their horses, and destroyed them without protest.<sup>96</sup> This tactic was cruel, but it was also inefficient. The Arabbers were able to continue operating out of several stables well into the 1980s. In fact, an article from the *Evening Sun* stated that as many as 15 stables still existed near Baltimore homes.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Letter, William Donald Scheafer to Community Relations Commission, Model Cities, Health Department, Department of Housing & Community Development, Board of Municipal & Zoning Appeals, Planning Commission, and Community Action Agency. "Ordinance NO. 1179," December 8, 1969, box 8, folder 4, Collection BRG48, Administrative Files, Neighborhood Development Division, Baltimore City Archives.

<sup>96</sup> The Film Foundry, Inc. *We Are Arabbers*, DVD, (2005).

<sup>97</sup> "If Enforced, City Law Would Ban Stables," *Evening Sun*, (February 18, 1976).

When you ask an Arabber why a particular stable was shut down, they most often answer “urban renewal.”<sup>98</sup> Stables were shuttered as developers moved into poor neighborhoods. In a documentary entitled, “We Are Arabbers,” the Arabbers seemed more frustrated by the way in which the government promoted urban renewal, rather than by the codes themselves. Rather than helping the Arabbers to make their stables “housing code friendly,” they neglected existing stables and blocked the construction of new stables, intimidating the Arabbers who worked in existing stables.<sup>99</sup>

### Post Urban Renewal

While the Arabbers continued their trade throughout the late twentieth century, living and working in Baltimore continued to pose many challenges. The Civil Rights movement peaked in the late 1960s, bringing with it some new respect for African American businesses. Unfortunately, the dream of economic, social, and political equality was never fully realized, particularly for poor black people in urban neighborhoods slated for demolition and redevelopment. In Baltimore, like in many other American cities, government funding came in waves and, for the most part, encouraged the destruction of neighborhoods in favor of retail and entertainment venues, businesses that benefitting tourists and suburban commuters, rather than black city residents. This was not specific to Baltimore, “the period between 1970 and the end of the 1980s, cities were faced with a set of formidable challenges, including

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<sup>98</sup> The Film Foundry, Inc. *We Are Arabbers*, DVD, (2005).

<sup>99</sup> The Film Foundry, Inc. *We Are Arabbers*, DVD, (2005).

population loss, the movement of firms outside of central cities, growth of the poverty population, a declining tax based... and the appearance of crack cocaine.”<sup>100</sup>

As part of urban decline, access to food became even more limited in the late twentieth century. “Supermarket redlining,” is a term “used to describe a phenomenon when major chain supermarkets are disinclined to locate their stores in inner cities or low-income neighborhoods and usually pull their existing stores out and relocate them to suburbs.”<sup>101</sup> The term was first made popular during the Conference of Mayors in 1992.<sup>102</sup> Clearly these trends had their roots in the 1940s, but rates of urban disinvestment and food chain mergers exacerbated the trend. By the end of the twentieth century, chains opened fewer but bigger stores, mostly in wealthy, white, suburban neighborhoods. “Between 1978 and 1984, Safeway closed more than 600 stores in inner city neighborhoods. Many of those stores were the primary or only source of reasonably priced (minimally processed) meat and produce in their neighborhoods.”<sup>103</sup>

The phenomenon of supermarket redlining, led to the coining of another useful term, “food deserts.” Also created in the 1990s, the term was used to describe many of Baltimore’s neighborhoods. A community is defined as a food deserts when

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<sup>100</sup> Patrick Sharkey, *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress Towards Racial Equality*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2013), 88.

<sup>101</sup> Mengyao Zhang and Ghosh Debarchana “Spatial Supermarket Redlining and Neighborhoods Vulnerability: A Case Study of Harford, Connecticut.” *Transactions in GIS: TG*, 20.1 (2016) 79-100. <http://doi.org/10.1111/tgis.12142>

<sup>102</sup> Elizabeth Eisenhauer, “In Poor Health: Supermarket Redlining and Urban Nutrition.” *GeoJournal*, volume 53 (2001), 128.

<sup>103</sup> Elizabeth Eisenhauer, “In Poor Health: Supermarket Redlining and Urban Nutrition.” *GeoJournal*, volume 53 (2001), 127. This law would have prevented wholesalers from unfairly charging different prices to retailers. The law also attempted to tax the number of stores owned by a chain.

more than 100 households have no vehicle available, when 20% of the community is below the poverty rate, and more than one mile from the nearest supermarket.<sup>104</sup>

While the term was not used until the 1990s, the conditions define food deserts have plagued urban communities for decades. The neighborhoods in which the Arabbers have lived, worked, and stabled their horses are the very same neighborhoods now deemed as food deserts. Studies designed to address these trends only took brick and mortar supermarkets and independent stores into consideration. However, juxtaposing the Baltimore City Food Environment map, which identifies food deserts, against the locations of Arabbers stables suggests that Arabbers have been providing fresh food to underserved communities in need for decades.

Arabbers continued to face a constant barrage of government rules and regulations. In 1989, “the Horse Bill” required licenses for all Arabbers. Among other things, it also declared that the minimum age to get a license was 18 and that the horses were required an annual checkup by a licensed veterinarian.<sup>105</sup> While this act positively enforced humane treatment of the Arabber’s horses, it required the Arabbers to pay an additional Arabbing license fee on top of their wagon license, required horse owners to pay the hefty fee for the veterinarian, and made it illegal for any adolescents to Arab, an element of the trade that increased bonding across generations. Additionally, the requirement of a license with a fee made the job less

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<sup>104</sup> “Food Access Research Atlas: Documentation” United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Last Updated Monday, May 22, 2017. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/documentation/>

<sup>105</sup> Roland Freeman, *The Arabbers of Baltimore*, (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 1989), 47.



attractive to Arabbers who used the profession as a backup option, a last minute or temporary job, to make ends meet.

Despite the challenges, the Arabbers have survived. The creation of the Arabber Preservation Society in 1994, has helped the Arabbers successfully navigate rules and regulations. Currently, there are three Arabber stables in the city, and one continues to actively send out Arabbers with their horse-drawn wagons to sell fresh produce to loyal customers.

## Appendix

This appendix contains a copy of the website text related to the Arabber stables.

The *Mapping Baltimore Arabbers* project can be viewed by following this link:

<https://sbjenkins4.wixsite.com/mappingbmorearabbers>

### *Whatcoat Street Stable*

The Arabbing tradition is passed down from generation to generation. In some families, it is difficult to find a member who has not Arabbed at some point in their life. This is the case with the Allen family, a well-known Arabbing family from west Baltimore. The Allen family owned the Whatcoat Street stable for fifty years. It had been a horse stable since the 1920s, even before the Allen family bought it in the early 1940s.<sup>106</sup> But, Allen's wife Mildred initiated the tradition of Arabbing in their family. According to former Arabber, Roland Freeman, Whatcoat Street Stable "continuously employed over forty people"<sup>107</sup> and many of those people were members of the Allen Family. Eugene and Mildred had twins, Pauline and Eugene. Eugene was the "fat one" and so his mother nicknamed him "Fatback," which then became his Arabber name.<sup>108</sup> Although there are not many records of women working

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<sup>106</sup> Roland Freeman, *The Arabbers of Baltimore*, (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 1989), 70.

<sup>107</sup> Roland Freeman, *The Arabbers of Baltimore*, (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 1989), 100.

<sup>108</sup> The Film Foundry, Inc. *We Are Arabbers*, DVD, (2005).

as Arabbers, both twins Arabbed throughout their life. “Fatback” was an Arabber for most of his life, and continued to be a leader of the Arabbing community, until his death in June 2017.

The fact that Arabbing is a family tradition is part of the reason for the trade’s survival. People knew the Allen family well. They were respected, and their neighbors wanted to support them. Descendants of Mildred and Eugene Allen still live in Baltimore and participate in the Arabbing trade. Cousin James Chase, also known as “Boom Boom” or “Fruit,” Arabbed out of Whatcoat for nearly twenty years. Fruit Chase is an engaging storyteller, and many of the stories from his Arabbing days are humorous, but all of them remind us that Arabbing is hard work. Fruit worked hard to satisfy the high expectations of his uncle, Anthony “Frog” Savoy, and his grandfather Donald “Manboy” Savoy Sr. Both Frog and Manboy are important figures in the Arabbing community.

### *Eutaw Street Stable*

During WWII, strict rationing of meat and gasoline opened opportunities for the Arabbers.<sup>109</sup> Using horse-drawn carts, they made fresh fruits and vegetables accessible to residents across the city. In 1942, *The Baltimore Sun* reported a significant change to 934 Eutaw Street.<sup>110</sup> At the beginning of the war, the site had housed a 22-car garage, but by 1942 such a structure was not only impractical, it was

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<sup>109</sup> Tracey Deutsch, *Building a Housewife’s Paradise: Gender, Politics, and American Grocery Stores in the Twentieth Century*. (University of North Carolina Press: 2010), 156-158.

<sup>110</sup> “The Old Gray Mare Returns to Eutaw Street ‘Garage’” *Baltimore Sun Newspaper*, May 30, 1942.

un-American. George Hamm purchased the site, painted over the “garage” sign and changed it to “stable.” He converted the parking spaces to stalls and housed 22 horses. For Hamm, it was the realization of a lifelong dream. During the war, then, Arabbing helped to relieve a variety of issues. It provided blacks with access to independent work, free from racist hiring practices.<sup>111</sup> It demonstrated black people’s commitment to the war effort, and their willingness to support rationing and work around shortages. Arabbers ensured that Baltimoreans ate healthy food, and they brought it right to front doors across the city. Unfortunately, this success was temporary, and Hamm’s stable may not have survived for very long. There is no record of its existing in the mid-1960s. “Fruit,” James Chase recalled that many stables closed during the period of “urban renewal,”<sup>112</sup> during which many neighborhoods were demolished to clear perceived blight or to make way for new highways, shopping centers, and large tourist attractions.

### *The Baltimore Harbor*

Throughout the twentieth century, Arabbers woke up before dawn, mounted their horses and wagons, and rode down to Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. There, they purchased produce in bulk to resell it to their customers around the city.<sup>113</sup> Although downtown Baltimore was an active business district, it was under-utilized and

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<sup>111</sup> Carl Schoettler, “For Black Steel Men, the Living Wasn’t Easy,” *The Baltimore Sun Newspaper* (February 02, 1998). This article discusses a newly released documentary about Bethlehem Steel at the Sparrows Point plant. One of the largest employers in Baltimore, it also practiced racist hiring methods.

<sup>112</sup> James Chase, interview by Sydney Jenkins, February 22, 2017.

<sup>113</sup> The Film Foundry, Inc. *We Are Arabbers*, DVD, (2005).

rundown.<sup>114</sup> To ramp up commercialization and tourism, Baltimore's mayor, William Schaefer approved Harborplace, a \$260 million, 30-year development plan to revitalize downtown around the harbor.<sup>115</sup> First the area was cleared. The harbor market relocated to Jessup, Maryland, thirty minutes by car from the city. This move benefitted large suburban grocery stores. The new Jessup market could accommodate large trucks moving large orders. But this shift was devastating to the Arabbers. No longer able to arrive at the market in a horse drawn wagon, Arabbers had to acquire trucks and other vehicles large enough to carry boxes of produce. They had to make a 30-minute commute to pick up the produce, and return with it to the stables early enough to meet customers' expectations. Smaller stables typically designated one driver to make the trip for all the Arabbers associated with that stable.<sup>116</sup> The move of the wholesale market changed the Arabbers labor practices, impacted distribution, and lengthened their work day. Unsurprisingly, the relocation of the harbor market caused a severe decline in the number and reach of Arabbers.

#### *Fremont Avenue Stable*

Fremont Avenue Stable is the only remaining active Arabber stable. It opened at a time when the Arabbers were worried about the sustainability of the trade. At the stable opened in 2000, the city had shut down several of the most active Arabber

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<sup>114</sup> James F. Thrift and William T. Childs, "Baltimore's Markets." *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 119.

<sup>115</sup> Tom Nugent and Ann Cooper, "The Symbol of a City's Dream?" *The Baltimore Sun*, (June 28, 1981) T1.

<sup>116</sup> Charles Camp, "The Arabber's World," introduction to *The Arabbers of Baltimore*, by Roland Freeman (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 1989), 7.

stables. The number of Arabbers had shrunk significantly. Fewer than 10 were working, the older generation of Arabbers were dying, and many felt the trade would not last more than ten or fifteen more years.<sup>117</sup>

Frances Mason, a member of the Arabber Preservation Society donated the Fremont Avenue property to the Arabber Preservation Society. In a *Baltimore Sun* article, Mason was quoted as saying it was her intention to keep the once-prevalent, symbol of Baltimore and way of life alive.<sup>118</sup> The Arabbers celebrated the opening of this new stable in a lively ceremony. Throughout the ceremony, those present thanked God for answering their prayers.<sup>119</sup>

James “Fruit” Chase, now the president of the Arabber Preservation Society as well as Fremont Avenue’s stable manager, was present for this ceremony. He and the other active members of the Arabbing community have become optimistic about the future of Arabbing, and he has big dreams for this stable. Recently, the Arabber Preservation Society established a partnership with the Maryland Horse Industry Board in hopes to get the stable certified as an Arabber Discovery Center. In this capacity, the property would continue to serve as an active Arabbing stable, but would also serve as a living history site that could offer field trips, after-school programs, and summer camps. The space would also serve the community as an event center, hosting events promoting African American history and culture, horse culture, and healthy eating. The Arabber Preservation Society also hopes to foster a

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<sup>117</sup> The Film Foundry, Inc. *We Are Arabbers*, DVD, (2005).

<sup>118</sup> “A-rab, 80, takes his last ride,” *The Baltimore Sun* (July 11, 2000) p 7.

<sup>119</sup> The Film Foundry, Inc. *We Are Arabbers*, DVD, (2005).

relationship with Baltimore City's Office of Sustainability and to partner with local farmers markets and to make their produce SNAP! and EBT card accessible.

### *McElderry Street Stable*

Jessie Davis, was a second generation East Baltimore Arabber. He purchased the McElderry Street Stable from Joe Lotz in the 1960s. Davis was able to support his wife and six children from the money he made renting out horse and wagons, as well as from having his own business "Jessie's Fruit and Produce." Arabbing was an important tradition in the Davis family. One of Jessie Davis's four sons, Vernon or "Moochie," is still an active member of the Arabbing community. "Moochie" is a third generation East Baltimore Arabber. He learned the trade by following along with his father beginning at the age of three.<sup>120</sup>

East Baltimore is largely ignored in modern discussions of the Arabbers, because all three of the existing stables are in West Baltimore. However, most of the historic stables were in East Baltimore.<sup>121</sup> Unfortunately, East Baltimore was largely demolished by urban renewal strategies and by slum clearance efforts beginning in the 1950s. Decisions about where and when to demolish neighborhoods were made swiftly, and without significant community engagement. For example, the Broadway Redevelopment Project, managed by Johns Hopkins University, demolished 54 acres and displaced over 1,000 East Baltimore families.<sup>122</sup> Moochie, and other East

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<sup>120</sup> Vernon "Moochie," interview by Sydney Jenkins, May 15, 2017.

<sup>121</sup> Vernon "Moochie," interview by Sydney Jenkins, May 15, 2017.

<sup>122</sup> Marisela B. Gomez, *Race, Class, Power, and Organizing in East Baltimore: Rebuilding Abandoned Communities in America* (Lanham: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc, 2013) 46-47.

Baltimore Arabbers believe redevelopment like this destroyed the tradition of Arabbing in East Baltimore.

### *Castle Street Stable*

The Arabbers have long had a contentious relationship with animal rights activists regarding the use of horses. For many, the iconic symbol of Arabbing is a horse-drawn wagon. Horses are the reason children run out and squeal with delight, and the reason many Arabbers were originally drawn to the profession. Horses bring joy. But some animal rights activists claim that the life of the Arabber horse is not joyful and that the Arabbers should not use them.

Animal rights groups have kept track of the Arabbers and their horses since the 1960s. In 1969, Baltimore City's government reached out to the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) to help them accurately identify the location of Arabber stables across the city. MSPCA reports have led the arrests of Arabbers and stable operators for various animal abuse violations over the years.<sup>123</sup>

In 1993, activists formed the Maryland Horse Protection Coalition (MHPC) in part to shut down the Arabbers. MHPC's spokeswoman, Colleen Brown, explained, "We didn't set out to take away a Baltimore tradition. Our point of view is it's wrong to have horses pulling carts in busy traffic, in hot weather, living in stables kept in deplorable conditions, with their hoovers in terrible shape, and sometimes reportedly

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<sup>123</sup> "Abuse of Ponies By Arabs Enrages Animal-Lovers," *Evening Sun*, February 18, 1976.



begin whipped by operators or owners.”<sup>124</sup> Although the vast majority of Arabber horses are well taken care of and loved, activists’ concerns were not without merit.<sup>125</sup> In 1994, just a year after they formed, the Bureau of Animal Control failed to investigate the neglect of five ponies that were found starving to death at Castle Street Stable.<sup>126</sup>

In recent years, the Arabber Preservation Society has formed a partnership with the Maryland Horse Industry Board. Together, they are developing a strategy to ensure all Arabber horses are properly cared for. They are planning a series of animal husbandry courses led by horse stable owners from around the state. The Fremont Avenue Stable is at the center of these plans. Stable owners are planning to build an on-site turn out at the stable, and they are developing an Arabber training course to help prospects pass the Arabber license test issued by Baltimore City’s Animal Control, which focuses on the care of horses.

### *Carlton Street Stable*

Built around 1899 by Charles Boyle, Carlton Street stable originally housed horses and mules that pulled city dump carts. Walter “Buck” Kratz purchased the stable in 1928 and turned into an Arabbing stable. “He also hired out teams for use in junking, for selling ice, wood, and coal, and for hauling bananas from boats to the

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<sup>124</sup>“For Horse-Drawn Carts, Hurdles in Baltimore,” *New York Times*, November 12, 1995.

<sup>125</sup> Allan Schwartz, The Film Foundry, *We Are Arabbers*, (33:40).

Cooper Williams, Film Foundry, *We Are Arabbers*, (34:16).

<sup>126</sup> JoAnna Daemmrch, “Baltimore Should Phase Out A-rab Ponies,” *The Baltimore Sun* (April 12, 1994).

wholesalers.”<sup>127</sup> Carlton Street, is around the corner from another center of Baltimore’s food history, Hollins Market, the oldest existing public market building in Baltimore. While there is no known contention between these two locations, there exist earlier records of the competition between Baltimore’s public markets and street peddlers, who had yet to acquire the name “Arabbers.”<sup>128</sup> It seems though that the Hollins public markets had little influence on the success of this Arabber stable, as it now boasts the oldest existing Arabber stable in Baltimore. Carlton Street Stable was also well known within the Arabbing community. Arabbers would come from all over the city to be helped by Carlton Street’s own wagon maker and repair man, Walter “Teeth” Kelly.<sup>129</sup> Surrounded by several other Arabbing stables and just down the street from the Arabber’s farrier, with easy access to resources, the Carlton Street Stable could easily thrive.

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<sup>127</sup> Roland Freeman, *The Arabbers of Baltimore*, (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 1989), 48.

<sup>128</sup> John W. Farley, “A Questionnaire on Markets.” *Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution* ed. Clyde Lyndon King (American Academy of Political and Social Science, November 1913), 148.

<sup>129</sup> Roland Freeman, *The Arabbers of Baltimore*, (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 1989), 50.

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