An Atlas of the Oakwood Neighborhood of Pittsburgh 1977

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PITTSBURGH NEIGHBORHOOD ATLAS

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Weld Tooling Company
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Initiated by the PITTSBURGH NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

INTRODUCTION

The Pittsburgh Neighborhood Alliance was formed in 1969 by a number of neighborhood organizations that were concerned with improving the city's neighborhoods and their relations with city government. The members of the Alliance recognized that in order to negotiate effectively with city government about such major concerns as public service needs, capital improvements and transportation, it was necessary to obtain accurate, up-to-date information about the neighborhoods. Unfortunately, this information was not available.

To remedy this situation, the Alliance developed its Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas project. First, the boundaries of the city's neighborhoods had to be determined. The Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas asked people attending community meetings to name and describe the boundaries of the neighborhoods in which they lived. This information was also provided by an Atlas-initiated survey. Responses from every voting district of the city were analyzed to assure citizen involvement at the neighborhood level. Seventy-eight neighborhoods were thus identified, each made up of one or more whole voting districts in order to comply with provisions in Pittsburgh's home rule charter relating to the election of community advisory boards.

The Atlas then gathered a body of useful and up-to-date information for every neighborhood. It is the beginning of a neighborhood information system that more closely reflects neighborhood boundaries as defined by residents instead of by public officials. In the past, statistics about sections of the city have been based on information published for relatively large areas such as census tracts. For the atlas, much of the material describing neighborhood characteristics came from figures compiled for smaller areas: voting districts or census blocks. As a result, detailed information is now available for neighborhoods whose boundaries differ substantially from census tract boundaries.

The information in this atlas provides an insight into current neighborhood conditions and the direction in which the neighborhood is moving. The best indicators showing the health of the neighborhood are provided by citizen satisfaction with the neighborhood, and changes in residential real estate transaction prices. Comparison of these statistics to those for the entire city provide a basis to begin understanding issues of neighborhood stability. In the years to come, as additional data are gathered for each of these indicators, trends will become more obvious.

It is important to recognize that neighborhood change is a complex process and that one indicator by itself may not be useful. Neighborhoods may be healthy regardless of their level of income, and therefore income-related statistics may not be useful guides by themselves. Neighborhoods must be viewed over time in terms of relative changes compared to the city as a whole, and any analysis of neighborhood conditions must focus upon all of the data in order to provide a comprehensive understanding.

To learn about specific sections of the neighborhood, figures by individual voting district or census tract may be obtained. Additional information on the neighborhood or the information system is available through the Center for Urban Research of the University of Pittsburgh, which has made an outstanding contribution to the development of this atlas.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Oakwood is approximately 3.1 miles west of downtown. It is estimated to be 181.3 acres in size, containing 0.5% of the city's land and 0.4% of its 1974 population. The voting district in the neighborhood is #2, Ward 28. (See Appendix for a listing of the neighborhood's census tracts.)
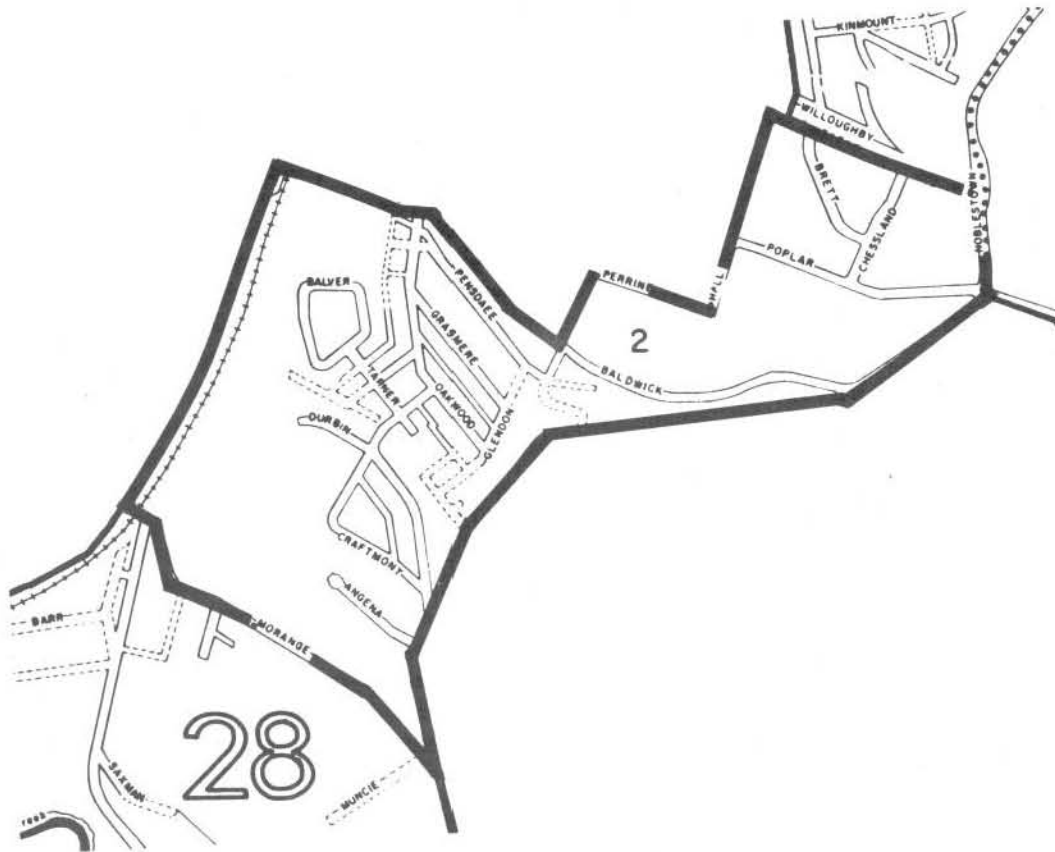
NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY
OAKWOOD

Oakwood was a part of Chartiers Township at the time of its annexation to Pittsburgh.

Chartiers Township was named for Pierre Chartiers, a trapper of French and Indian parentage, who spied for France while living in Philadelphia, Discovered in 1743, Chartiers left that city, moving west to establish a trading post at the mouth of Chartiers Creek. The mound above the creek's mouth (now McKees Rocks) was often occupied by Indians at that time. The Ohio Company of Virginia favored building a fort on the site to alleviate Indian problems which continued in the area up to the early 1800's. Active among the Delaware Indian tribes, Chartiers had a bad name among settlers.

John Bell was Chartiers Township's first white pioneer. He reached a point in what is now East Carnegie in October 1768, settling permanently the next year and raising livestock on land later owned by John Doolittle. David Steel was the first settler in the uplands of the township. Other early settlers included Joseph Hall, Jacob Day and the Stoop family.

In 1804, William McMachen came to the mouth of Ingram Station. Andrew Robinson settled one half mile northwest near Chartiers City. James McDonald settled near the mouth of Chartiers Creek in 1811. By 1808, Congress had declared Chartiers Creek a navigable and public highway forever, such was the importance of its location to the nation.

In 1825, General Edward Hand, commander of Fort Pitt, had a two story log hospital built in the area for convalescing soldiers. The rural serenity of Chartiers served them well.

Chartiers Township was officially incorporated from a part of Lower St. Clair Township by an act of assembly approved April 15, 1851. The township's population was 3,075 in 1860, increasing to 3,346 by 1880. The Pan Handle Railroad opened a line through the area in 1865.

The area surrounding Idlewood, a stop on the Pan Handle line within East Carnegie near Oakwood, was originally claimed by Cohee Campbell under a Pennsylvania warrant. In 1872, the Homestead Bank and Life Insurance Company secured 240 acres there and laid out a town known as Homestead Park. Lots were sold at "fabulous" prices. In 1873, however, the company failed, leaving enormous liabilities. The land reverted back to its original owners.

Although there was little building activity in Idlewood until 1880, development was not deterred. From then until the end of the decade, one hundred homes were built. A post office was established in 1882. The opening of the Idlewood Cottages, a resort and the establishment of a Methodist church in 1884, greatly added to the attractiveness of the township.

East Carnegie itself developed in connection with nearby manufacturing companies such as Columbia Steel and Union Electric Company. The neighborhood was built up during the 1890's.

Chartiers Township was annexed to the City of Pittsburgh on January 1, 1921. At that time the township encompassed Chartiers City, Windgap, Crafton Heights, Oakwood, East Carnegie and Broadhead Manor-Westgate village.

OAKWOOD

Summary Statistics

	Neighborhood	Pittsburgh
Population (1974)	1,913	479,276
% Change (1970-1974)	+3%	-8%
% Black population (1970)	1%	20%
Housing units (1974)	567	166,625
% Vacant	1%	6%
% Owner-occupied housing units (1970)	49%	50%
Average sales price of owner-occupied dwellings (1975)	$22,193	$23,518
% Residential real estate transactions with mortgages provided by financial institutions (1975)	88%	59%
Crime rate (1975)	0.012	0.053
% Satisfied with neighborhood (1976)	34%	41%
Major neighborhood problems (1976)	Poor roads	Poor roads Dog litter Burglary

CITIZEN SURVEY

The purpose of the citizen survey was to obtain attitudes about the quality of the neighborhood environment. Citizens were asked to respond to questions concerning the neighborhood as a whole, neighborhood problems, and public services. The attitudinal data, heretofore not available, are key indicators of the relative health of the neighborhood. By specifying neighborhood problems or public service needs, the information may be a useful guide for public investment or service delivery decisions.

The city-wide survey was mailed to a randomly selected sample of registered voters. Of approximately 35,000 households contacted, 9,767 responded. The sample provides a 5% response rate for each of the city's 423 voting districts. (See Appendix for a profile of the respondents as well as for statistics on voter registration.)

I. Neighborhood Satisfaction

        Oakwood residents are generally less satisfied with their neighbor-
hood than residents city-wide. Table 1 shows that 34% of the citizens responding
to the survey were satisfied with their neighborhood compared to 41% in all
city neighborhoods. When asked to state whether the neighborhood is better
or worse than two years ago, 28% said that it was better which exceeded the
city-wide response of 12%. Given the opportunity to move from the neighbor-
hood, 31% said they would continue to live there compared to a response of
45% for the city as a whole. The responses to these satisfaction questions
indicate a mixed attitude of residents toward their neighborhood compared to
citizens city-wide.

TABLE 1

Neighborhood Satisfaction
Oakwood

Question 1: Generally, how satisfied are you with conditions in this neigh-
             borhood?

	Satisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Neither (%)
Oakwood	34	34	31
All neighborhoods	41	37	21

Question 2: Do you think this neighborhood has gotten better or worse over
             the past two years?

	Better (%)	Worse (%)	Not Changed (%)
Oakwood	28	31	38
All neighborhoods	12	49	36

Question 3: If you had your choice of where to live, would you continue liv-
             ing in this neighborhood?

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
Oakwood	31	21	38
All neighborhoods	45	32	18

SOURCE: Citizen Survey, 1976.

NOTE: The percent responses to each question do not add up to 100%. The
difference is accounted for by the following: "don't know", "unable to
evaluate" or no answer.

II. Neighborhood Problems

In order to identify specific neighborhood problems, residents were asked to consider twelve problems usually associated with urban communities and rate them for the neighborhood. Table 2 compares the problem ratings of the respondents from Oakwood to those from all city neighborhoods. An area of particular concern for the neighborhood is poor roads.

III. Satisfaction with Public Services

Table 3 shows the satisfaction of Oakwood residents with their public services and compares the responses to data for all city neighborhoods. City-wide, residents are least satisfied with street and alley maintenance. Oakwood residents are more satisfied with respect to garbage collection and public transportation and less satisfied with respect to street maintenance, the police and the fire department.

The Citizen Survey also asked the respondents to list the services with which they were the least satisfied and to explain the reasons for their dissatisfaction. Residents from Oakwood gave the greatest number of reasons for dissatisfaction to the services listed below. Included is a summary of the major reasons for their dissatisfaction.

1. Street and alley maintenance: Poor maintenance; need for better street repair program; problems with potholes.

2. Police: Inadequate police services; not enough police protection.

3. Fire Department: Fire station too far away; need for fire station in the neighborhood.

TABLE 2

Neighborhood Problems
Oakwood

Problem Category	Problem Rating – Percent Response		
	Not a Problem	Minor or Moderate	Big or Very Serious
1. Unsafe streets			
Oakwood	41	45	3
All neighborhoods	25	45	21
2. Vandalism			
Oakwood	17	72	3
All neighborhoods	13	49	28
3. Rats			
Oakwood	41	28	0
All neighborhoods	34	33	12
4. Burglary			
Oakwood	14	52	17
All neighborhoods	14	44	29
5. Poor roads			
Oakwood	17	31	48
All neighborhoods	17	41	33
6. Trash and litter			
Oakwood	31	66	0
All neighborhoods	27	41	24
7. Vacant buildings			
Oakwood	90	7	0
All neighborhoods	49	24	13
8. Undesirable people moving into the neighborhood			
Oakwood	69	17	0
All neighborhoods	42	28	15
9. Stray dogs			
Oakwood	45	41	7
All neighborhoods	25	38	18
10. Dog litter			
Oakwood	66	28	3
All neighborhoods	21	38	32

SOURCE: Citizen Survey, 1976.

NOTE: The neighborhood percentages do not add up to 100%. The difference is accounted for by the following responses: "don't know", "unable to evaluate" or no answer. The problem categories of alcoholism and drug abuse are not included in the table because the response rates to these questions were low.

TABLE 3

Satisfaction with Public Services
Oakwood

Service	Percent Response		
	Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied
1. Parks and Recreation			
Oakwood	31	21	31
All neighborhoods	51	15	23
2. Schools			
Oakwood	28	3	24
All neighborhoods	46	12	21
3. Street Maintenance			
Oakwood	21	17	59
All neighborhoods	32	15	49
4. Alley Maintenance			
Oakwood	24	7	21
All neighborhoods	20	13	39
5. Garbage Collection			
Oakwood	76	7	14
All neighborhoods	74	10	13
6. Police			
Oakwood	38	17	45
All neighborhoods	51	17	23
7. Public Transportation			
Oakwood	55	7	38
All neighborhoods	61	11	23
8. Fire Department			
Oakwood	21	21	41
All neighborhoods	78	7	3
9. Sewage System			
Oakwood	41	14	17
All neighborhoods	63	10	13
10. Condition and Cost of Housing			
Oakwood	52	17	10
All neighborhoods	44	17	22

SOURCE: Citizen Survey, 1976.

NOTE: The percent responses to each question do not add up to 100%. The
difference is accounted for by the following: "don't know", "unable to
evaluate" or no answer. Public health and mental health/retardation
services are not included in the table because the response rates to these
questions were low.

CRIME RATE

The crime rate for major crimes has decreased over the last three years (Table 4). In 1973 the number of major crimes per capita was .013 compared to .012 in 1975. The crime rate in the neighborhood was less than the city per capita rate of .053 in 1975.

TABLE 4

Crime Rate: Major Crimes
Oakwood

| | Major Crimes | Crime Rate | |
Year	Number	Neighborhood	Pittsburgh
1973	25	.013	.043
1974	23	.012	.047
1975	22	.012	.053

SOURCE: City of Pittsburgh, Bureau of Police.

NOTE: Major crimes are murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary and theft. The neighborhood crime rate is computed by dividing the number of crimes committed in the neighborhood by its adjusted population for 1974.

THE PEOPLE

Table 5 and Table 6 present data on the characteristics of the neighborhood population and compare them to city-wide statistics.

In 1974, the population of Oakwood was estimated to be 1,913, up by 3% since 1970. This compares to a city-wide population decline of 8% during the same period. Information on the racial composition of the neighborhood is not available for 1974; however, the number of Black households in the neighborhood increased during the decade of the sixties, and the Black population was 0.8% of the neighborhood's population in 1970, compared to 20.2% for the city.

The average household size in the neighborhood was 2.90 persons in 1974, down from 1970. The percentage of the population 65 years and older was 8.2% in 1970, compared to 13.5% for the city as a whole.

TABLE 5

Population and Housing Characteristics, 1970 and 1974
Oakwood

| | Neighborhood | | Pittsburgh | |
	1970	1974	1970	1974
Population				
% Black	0.8%	....	20.2%	....
% 65 years and over	8.2%	....	13.5%	....
Households				
% One-person households	20.3%	16.8%	25.4%	25.5%
% Retired head-of-households	....	22.1%	....	26.3%
% Households with children	....	39.8%	....	32.7%
% Female head-of-household with children	....	2.0%	....	6.4%
% In owner-occupied housing unit	48.6%	....	50.3%	54.2%
% Households changing place of residence within past year	....	18.4%	....	27.0%
Average household size	2.76	2.90	2.82	2.67

SOURCES: U. S. Census (1970) and R. L. Polk & Co. (1974).

NOTE: Dotted lines (....) indicate data unavailable for that year.

The turnover rate of households in the neighborhood is less than that for all of the city's neighborhoods. During 1973, 18.4% of the households in the neighborhood changed their place of residence compared to a rate of 27.0% for the city. (The figures represent households who have moved within the neighborhood or city as well as those moving into or out of the neighborhood or city.)

Female-headed households with children in 1974 comprised 2.0% of the total households in the neighborhood compared to 6.4% for the city as a whole. In 1974, one-person households consisted of 16.8% of the total households in the neighborhood compared to 25.5% city-wide and to 20.3% for the neighborhood in 1970.

TABLE 6

Neighborhood Change: 1960-1970 and 1970-1974
Oakwood

| | Number | Percent Change | |
	Neighborhood	Neighborhood	Pittsburgh
Population			
1960	1,508		
1970	1,857	+23	-14
1974	1,913	+ 3	- 8
Households[1]			
1960	478		
1970	634	+33	- 6
1974	560	-12	-12
Black Households[2]			
1960	3		
1970	4	+33	+15
1974	(Not available)		
Housing Units			
1960	522		
1970	650	+25	- 3
1974	567	-13	-12

SOURCES: U. S. Census (1960; 1970) and R. L. Polk & Co. (1974).

NOTE: The population figures reported by Polk are adjusted to account for under-reporting. Population includes persons living in institutions and other group quarters, such as nursing homes, dormitories or jails. Differences in the population, household, or housing unit count between 1970 and 1974 are due primarily to changes occurring in the neighborhood. A small percentage of the difference may be accounted for, however, by variations in data gathering techniques. Census statistics were compiled from information provided by all city households answering a standard questionnaire either by mail or interview on or about April 1, 1970. R. L. Polk collected its information by a door-to-door survey carried out over a period of several months. (See Appendix.)

[1]The number of occupied housing units equals the number of households.

[2]Non-white households in 1960.

NEIGHBORHOOD INCOME

The average family income in the neighborhood for the year 1969 could not be calculated; however, the average family income for census tract #2804, of which Oakwood is a part, was $11,900, 113% of the city average. R. L. Polk and Company computes an income index for each city census tract. In 1974, the income index for the census tract #2804 was 106% of the figure for the city as a whole. It is derived from the occupation of heads of households living within the census tract.

Table 7 shows the number of neighborhood households receiving cash grants in 1974, 1975 and 1976 under the public assistance program of the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare. Public assistance in the form of food stamps, Medicaid and various social services are also available to these households, as well as to other households in need. Public assistance payments were made to 5.4% of the neighborhood households in 1976, a lower proportion than for the city overall and an increase since 1974.

TABLE 7

Public Assistance: Households Receiving Cash Grants
Oakwood

Year	Neighborhood Number	Percent	Pittsburgh Percent
1974	12	2.1	16.0
1975	26	4.6	17.2
1976	30	5.4	18.0

SOURCE: Allegheny County Board of Assistance.

NOTE: The percentages are based on 1974 Polk households. Only households receiving cash grants under Aid to Dependent Children, Aid to Dependent Children-Unemployed Parent; General Assistance, and the State Blind Pension programs are tabulated. The count is of those on assistance as of April 5, 1974, February 28, 1975 and February 27, 1976; households whose grants were terminated between reporting dates are not included.

HOUSING

Table 6 shows that the number of housing units in Oakwood increased during the decade of the sixties and decreased from 1970 to 1974. Of the occupied housing units in the neighborhood, 48.6% were owner-occupied in 1970 compared to a city-wide rate of 50.3%. The vacancy rate in 1974 for the neighborhood was 1.1% which was less than the city-wide rate.

The average value of owner-occupied housing in the neighborhood was $16,500 in 1970, compared to a city-wide average of $14,800.

TABLE 8

Housing Characteristics: 1970 and 1974
Oakwood

	Neighborhood		Pittsburgh	
	1970	1974	1970	1974
Housing units				
% Vacant	2.5	1.1	6.2	6.2
% One-unit structures	47.8	....	52.9	....
Occupied housing units				
% Owner-occupied *	48.6	....	50.3	54.2
Average value: owner-occupied units[1]	$16,500	....	$14,800	....

SOURCES: U. S. Census (1970) and R. L. Polk (1974).

[1]Average value rounded to nearest one hundred dollars.

* As stated in the methodology a method of proration was used with neighborhoods that shared census tracts. An assumption was made that the neighborhood characteristics were evenly distributed within the neighborhood. However, in Oakwood the results of prorating the percentage of owner-occupied housing units for 1974 seemed misleading; therefore, this figure was not reported.

REAL ESTATE AND MORTGAGE LOAN TRANSACTIONS

The average sales price of owner-occupied housing was $22,193 in 1975. (See Table 9.) Although the average price was less than the city-wide average, the implications of this divergence are difficult to judge because of variations in the quality and size of the structures among city neighborhoods. As additional data are obtained, however, the trend in real estate prices for the neighborhood can be compared to the trend for the city as a whole in order to determine relative differences.

In order to evaluate the extent to which private lenders are involved in the neighborhood, the number of mortgage loans made on residential property each year must be divided by the number of residential real estate transactions for that year. The percentage of residential real estate transactions financed through financial institutions was 88% in 1975 in Oakwood compared to a city-wide rate of 59%. The implications of the difference between the two rates are difficult to discern because of variations in risk factors and income levels among city neighborhoods. However, as additional data become available, trends in lending activity within the neighborhood compared to other neighborhoods or to the city as a whole can be assessed.

TABLE 9

Real Estate and Mortgage Loan Statistics
Oakwood

	Neighborhood	Pittsburgh
Average sales price: owner occupied dwellings		
1974	$23,105	$21,582
1975	$22,193	$23,518
Number of residential mortgages		
1973	10	
1974	10	
1975	10	
% Residential real estate transactions with mortgages provided by financial institutions		
1974	70%	58%
1975	88%	59%

SOURCE: City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning.

APPENDIX

a. <u>Data Sources</u>: Information for the atlas was obtained from the 1960 and 1970 U. S. Census of Population and Housing; R. L. Polk and Company's "Profiles of Change" for Pittsburgh in 1974; Pittsburgh's Department of City Planning and Bureau of Police; the Allegheny County Board of Assistance and Department of Elections and Voter Registration; Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission; and the Citizen Survey conducted by the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas.

b. <u>Neighborhood Census Tract</u>: Part of 2804.

c. <u>Methodology</u>: The opinions and characteristics of survey respondents, as well as voter registration, were recorded by voting district and then compiled for Oakwood by the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas in conjunction with the Center for Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh. Other material in the atlas was drawn from statistics tabulated for city census tracts or census blocks.

The neighborhood boundaries, which were determined on the basis of whole voting districts, do not conform exactly to census tract boundaries, so minor boundary adjustments were made wherever possible to simplify data collection efforts. In Oakwood and in other parts of the city where substantial portions of a census tract fall in more than one neighborhood, the neighborhood characteristics for 1960 and 1970 were arrived at by adding together data for the census blocks in the neighborhood, item by item. The statistics from sources other than the U. S. Census were made available only by census tract, not by census block; therefore, a method for prorating the data among neighborhoods was developed. The procedure allocated data for each neighborhood containing partial census tracts on the basis of the proportion of total tract population, households, or housing units contained in each sub-section.

To compensate for under-reporting, the 1974 igure for the neighborhood population has been increased by 1.11, a factor that was derived from the U. S. Bureau of the Census 1973 population estimate for Pittsburgh. An additional adjustment has been made where applicable, since Polk and Co. does not count persons living in institutions or other group quarters. To arrive at the total estimated population for 1974, neighborhood population was further increased by adding the number of persons in group quarters for the neighborhood according to the 1970 Census.

d. <u>Characteristics of the Sample</u>: In Oakwood, 29 citizens answered the questionnaire. Based on the number of replies to each question, the characteristics of the respondents can be generally described as follows: an average age of 43; 75% female; 4% Black; 88% with at least four years of high school education; 69% homeowners; and an average of 12 years in the neighborhood. The median household income falls in the range of $10,000 to $14,999; the average household size is 3.00 persons; and 58% of the households have no members under 18 years old living in the home.

The total sample (all respondents to the survey) was over-represented by homeowners (68% compared to 50% for Pittsburgh in 1970) and under-represented by Blacks (14% compared to a city Black population of 20% in 1970).

e. <u>Voter Registration</u>: In November, 1976, 770 residents of the neighborhood were registered to vote, an increase of 29 (+3.9%) since November, 1975. In this period, city registration increased by 1.3% to 233,028 persons.

In the process of collecting data for this
publication, the Pittsburgh Neighborhood
Atlas staff was assisted by many community
organizations. The following list reflects
the organization that we were able to make
contact with in Oakwood:

Oakwood Citizens Council
1687 Dorbin Street
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15205 (1972)
922-7644

Note: Dates in parenthesis indicate when
organization started.