New Census Study Finds a Wealthier, Younger PLG

by Milford Prewitt

That longtime residents see from a brief stroll along Flatbush Avenue or infer from recent million-dollar-plus house sales in the Lefferts Manor Historic District, the U.S. Census Bureau is confirming: Prospect Lefferts Gardens is growing richer, whiter and younger.

While the fruits of gentrification are leading to rising lease and retail rents and a blossoming of new restaurants and retail options along Flatbush and Rogers Avenues, more than 4,000 black people won’t be sharing in the bounty. That is the number of black residents who have left the neighborhood or died between 2010 and 2013.

The American Community Survey for 2013 says black residents are still the neighborhood’s predominant racial group by far—accounting for seven of every ten residents. But blacks of all income groups are saying goodbye to PLG.

The survey is an update—estimates based mainly on demographic projections and statistical forecasting—the Census Bureau conducts every year following each decade’s decennial national headcount. In this case, the bureau used the 2010 Census to project black population trends between 2010 and 2013 in two categories: homeowners (up by one tract from the 2010 Census) that roughly conforms to PLG’s traditional borders. Those borders are Prospect Park to New York Avenue, west to east; and Empire Boulevard to Parkside Avenue, north to south.

Figures for 2013 are the most current available. The data won’t be available until the summer of 2016.

Slight Population Growth

Despite all the new faces PLG old-timers are likely to see when catching the subway, shopping locally or warning local throwdowns, the neighborhood’s population hardly grew in 2013. Total population growth was up less than a fraction of 1 percent, from 37,893 persons in 2010, to 37,969 in 2013. Although blacks made up nearly 71 percent of the total population here, 2,332 of them left the neighborhood in the three years, 2010-13. Black residential population dropped 7 percent, from 26,387 to 23,869. Their declining population was overwhelmed by the white population.

The white population grew 14 percent between 2010 and 2013, from 3,599 to 5,084.

Like the white population, PLG’s Hispanic population also grew by double-digit percentages, up 18 percent in 2013 to 3,958. The Asian community grew as well, to 87, an 8 percent increase, during the same three-year time frame.

One indicator to watch for some of the slide in the black population may be that there were fewer households in PLG in 2013. Total households fell by 354, a 2.5 percent drop to 14,687, from 15,041 in the 2010 Census.

But given the scores of new residential units that will be pumped into the pipeline in the next one-to-two years, the decline in overall households is bound to reverse itself.

Rich Houses, Poor Houses

That rich people are covering the century-plus-old homes in the Manor and adjoining streets and paying record-breaking prices for a home in a new development or a resale is a familiar sight in the neighborhood and a boon for the sellers. But stark differences in the neighborhood’s household incomes, where families on government assistance can live on the same block as judges, mayors, baseball league umpires, corporate attorneys, and Wall Street wheelers-dealers, is creating another kind of diversity.

According to the Survey, one of the fastest rising income groups in PLG in 2013 was households earning $100,000 a year or more. They were up 36 percent, to 308 households.

The very poor—determined by New York’s poverty income level of less than $19,550 for a family of four or $11,990 for an individual—declined.

In 2010, households earning $25,000 to $39,999 numbered 1,178. They declined more than 20 percent in 2013, to 988. It’s unclear how to view trend that golden wages and salaries have hardly increased since the end of the Great Recession.

Did those families make more money and move into a higher income group or did they leave the neighborhood?

August, the Center for Economic Opportunity, using the same Survey numbers, reported that nearly half of all city residents—45.6 percent—were living near poverty and that the city’s Asian population has surpassed Hispanics as the city’s poorest group. Moreover, the CEO reported that 34,000 people fell into poverty in the past three years.

The findings about middle-income household ranges in PLG showed a household earning $50,000 to $74,999 to have increased 66.3 percent, to 3,594. But households that reported $100,000 to $124,999 incomes declined 7 percent since 2010, to 746 households.

Restaurant Team Doubles Down On Slain Owner’s Drive to Succeed

by Milford Prewitt

Despite his cool demeanor and soft-spoken speech, one could tell that Rick Young was very proud about his son, Ky. It was not hard to see the pride oozed out of Young through his manner to best retrain himself.

A restaurant that serves Southern soul with Caribbean cooking and food that was “always about family,” Ky is a father of a new child. With hard work a word of advertising and a soft opening, TOB would enjoy mouth-of-mouth referrals from neighbors, high marks in the blogsphere, and steady walk-in traffic. The signature dish is unlike anything to be found in Prospect Lefferts Gardens: cantaloupe and fried chicken.

Arguably the slickest looking restaurant in the area, it boasts rich wooden accents, high banquettes, and tall dining tables. The eye-catching centerpiece—Young didn’t need to point out—is the 500-gallon aquarium suspended over a large wooden communal table.

What Young was also proud of but didn’t boast about was how much his kitchen crew and front-of-the-house staff—folks who never worked together, on the suspended over a large wooden communal table.

“We loved producing ‘Daydream’ and all the other things just for parents,” Kenin said.

How big a role does PLG play in this series?

“The show is written and created by PLG residents Laura Frenzer, former executive director of PLG Arts, and Rochana Kenin, former PLG Arts board member and theatre director,” Kenin said. “I’ve always wanted to be a chef,” she said, weeks before her boss’s death. “This is a great opportunity for me.”

The findings about middle-income household ranges in PLG showed a household earning $50,000 to $74,999 to have increased 66.3 percent, to 3,594. But households that reported $100,000 to $124,999 incomes declined 7 percent since 2010, to 746 households.

Young was very proud about his newest venture, Taste of Brooklyn. The pride that longtime residents see from a brief stroll along Flatbush Avenue or infer from recent million-dollar-plus house sales in the Lefferts Manor Historic District, the U.S. Census Bureau is confirming: Prospect Lefferts Gardens is growing richer, whiter and younger.

While the fruits of gentrification are leading to rising lease and retail rents and a blossoming of new restaurants and retail options along Flatbush and Rogers Avenues, more than 4,000 black people won’t be sharing in the bounty. That is the number of black residents who have left the neighborhood or died between 2010 and 2013.

The American Community Survey for 2013 says black residents are still the neighborhood’s predominant racial group by far—accounting for seven of every ten residents. But blacks of all income groups are saying goodbye to PLG.

The survey is an update—estimates based mainly on demographic projections and statistical forecasting—the Census Bureau conducts every year following each decade’s decennial national headcount. In this case, the bureau used the 2010 Census to project black population trends between 2010 and 2013 in two categories: homeowners (up by one tract from the 2010 Census) that roughly conforms to PLG’s traditional borders. Those borders are Prospect Park to New York Avenue, west to east; and Empire Boulevard to Parkside Avenue, north to south.

Figures for 2013 are the most current available. The data won’t be available until the summer of 2016.

Slight Population Growth

Despite all the new faces PLG old-timers are likely to see when catching the subway, shopping locally or warning local throwdowns, the neighborhood’s population hardly grew in 2013. Total population growth was up less than a fraction of 1 percent, from 37,893 persons in 2010, to 37,969 in 2013. Although blacks made up nearly 71 percent of the total population here, 2,332 of them left the neighborhood in the three years, 2010-13. Black residential population dropped 7 percent, from 26,387 to 23,869. Their declining population was overwhelmed by the white population.

The white population grew 14 percent between 2010 and 2013, from 3,599 to 5,084.

Like the white population, PLG’s Hispanic population also grew by double-digit percentages, up 18 percent in 2013 to 3,958. The Asian community grew as well, to 87, an 8 percent increase, during the same three-year time frame.

One indicator to watch for some of the slide in the black population may be that there were fewer households in PLG in 2013. Total households fell by 354, a 2.5 percent drop to 14,687, from 15,041 in the 2010 Census.

But given the scores of new residential units that will be pumped into the pipeline in the next one-to-two years, the decline in overall households is bound to reverse itself.

Rich Houses, Poor Houses

That rich people are covering the century-plus-old homes in the Manor and adjoining streets and paying record-breaking prices for a home in a new development or a resale is a familiar sight in the neighborhood and a boon for the sellers. But stark differences in the neighborhood’s household incomes, where families on government assistance can live on the same block as judges, mayors, baseball league umpires, corporate attorneys, and Wall Street wheelers-dealers, is creating another kind of diversity.

According to the Survey, one of the fastest rising income groups in PLG in 2013 was households earning $100,000 a year or more. They were up 36 percent, to 308 households.

The very poor—determined by New York’s poverty income level of less than $19,550 for a family of four or $11,990 for an individual—declined.

In 2010, households earning $25,000 to $39,999 numbered 1,178. They declined more than 20 percent in 2013, to 988. It’s unclear how to view trend that golden wages and salaries have hardly increased since the end of the Great Recession.

Did those families make more money and move into a higher income group or did they leave the neighborhood?

August, the Center for Economic Opportunity, using the same Survey numbers, reported that nearly half of all city residents—45.6 percent—were living near poverty and that the city’s Asian population has surpassed Hispanics as the city’s poorest group. Moreover, the CEO reported that 34,000 people fell into poverty in the past three years.

The findings about middle-income household ranges in PLG showed a household earning $50,000 to $74,999 to have increased 66.3 percent, to 3,594. But households that reported $100,000 to $124,999 incomes declined 7 percent since 2010, to 746 households.
The Borough President’s Office

The Honorable Genine D. Edwards: State Supreme Court Candidate

Judge Genine Edwards isn’t a lifelong resident of Prospect Lefferts Gardens, but the neighborhood has been part of her life since her early childhood school days. A lifelong Brooklynite who was reared in Crown Heights, she used to travel here as a young girl to attend a home-based art class on Maple Street. She never forgot the luscub tree canopies, the mix of cultures, the big homes, and the close proximity to the Brooklyn Public Library, Prospect Park and the Botanic Gardens.

She lived her dream of becoming a lawyer, then a wife and a mother, and then a judge. But she also lived her dream to return to the neighborhood of good childhood memories, PLG, and make it her home.

Judge Edwards is also a long-serving member of the board of the Lefferts Manor Association. She has been a Civil Court Judge in New York City since 2005.

Ten years ago she was appointed an Acting Supreme Court Justice—endorsed by the Democratic, Republican and Conservative Parties—to be an elected New York State Supreme Court Justice.

Four years ago she was appointed an Acting Supreme Court Justice, and then a judge. But she also lived her dream to return to the neighborhood of good childhood memories, PLG, and make it her home.

What do you think of the neighborhood’s gentrification? I think there has to be a way for all of us to live together. I am not fond of people moving out of homes and businesses they’ve lived in or worked in for thirty or forty years. But this neighborhood has always been diverse. There is no reason we can’t live together.

What do you guys do for fun? What do you do when you are not a judge? I basically hang out with my boys. I enjoy reading and playing board games with my family. I don’t travel much because of commitments and attending to the needs of my sons. I’ve made sure that my sons move forward into adulthood and whatever they need, that comes first.

You have had a pretty diversified career as a judge and lawyer. Were you assistant corporate counsel defending the City of New York, a defense counsel for the New York Power Authority in discrimination cases, volunteer Small Claims Court arbitrator, and Civil Court Judge. Did you always aspire to be a judge? What do you like about the law? Well, I went into international studies at Long Island University and graduated with a perfect 3.9 grade point average but I could not get a job at the United Nations. I decided to apply to law school and was admitted to St. John’s University School of Law. When I got to law school, that was when I realized that the judge is the one that really gets a person’s life and I wanted to be part of that. I just like being involved in dispute resolution.

How long have you been in the neighborhood? Ten years. But I go back to my earliest childhood when I attended a home-based art class here. Those memories of this neighborhood energize, cleanse and satisfy. The iconcoctions are also delicious. The Brooklyn Greenery: There’s More To It Than Just Healthy Food

The Brooklyn Greenery aims to raise the bar on serving fresh, healthy food in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, and the two young entrepreneurs behind the venture possess the right attitude and intelligence to keep the bar high. Founded by partners Jason Young and Augustin Marroquin, the Brooklyn Greenery is equal parts healthy food emporium, politically- and environmentally-correct discussion hall, book exchange and even a live music and spoken word venue.

To It Than Healthy Food

The Brooklyn Greenery: There’s More To It Than Just Healthy Food

The Brooklyn Greenery aims to raise the bar on serving fresh, healthy food in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, and the two young entrepreneurs behind the venture possess the right attitude and intelligence to keep the bar high. Founded by partners Jason Young and Augustin Marroquin, the Brooklyn Greenery is equal parts healthy food emporium, politically- and environmentally-correct discussion hall, book exchange and even a live music and spoken word venue.

The Brooklyn Greenery: There’s More To It Than Just Healthy Food

The Brooklyn Greenery aims to raise the bar on serving fresh, healthy food in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, and the two young entrepreneurs behind the venture possess the right attitude and intelligence to keep the bar high. Founded by partners Jason Young and Augustin Marroquin, the Brooklyn Greenery is equal parts healthy food emporium, politically- and environmentally-correct discussion hall, book exchange and even a live music and spoken word venue.

Towards a more diverse neighborhood

PLG’s Age Diversity

The Survey also supplied data that suggests PLG is becoming both a youthful enclave and a retiree community at the same time.

Young working adults (20-called Millennials) and residents entering retirement age (Baby Boomers and their elders) are sizable blocks of the local population. But both are growing at different rates.

The rate of growth in the number of households with retirement-age occupants is stalling while, in absolute numbers, households with young adults outnumber all others by a two-to-one margin.

There were 73,993 households in 2013 where at least one resident aged in age 65 to 30, an increase of 4.8 percent over 2010. Another way to look at it, out of the 148,867 total households in PLG, almost half are occupied by at least one person between 25-30-year-olds.

Retirement Age Baby Boomers, aged 65 to 74, lived in 2,444 households in 2013, up 19 percent from 2010.

What do you think of the neighborhood’s gentrification? I think there has to be a way for all of us to live together. I am not fond of people moving out of homes and businesses they’ve lived in or worked in for thirty or forty years. But this neighborhood has always been diverse. There is no reason we can’t live together.

What do you guys do for fun? What do you do when you are not a judge? I basically hang out with my boys. I enjoy reading and playing board games with my family. I don’t travel much because of commitments and attending to the needs of my sons. I’ve made sure that my sons move forward into adulthood and whatever they need, that comes first.

You have had a pretty diversified career as a judge and lawyer. Were you assistant corporate counsel defending the City of New York, a defense counsel for the New York Power Authority in discrimination cases, volunteer Small Claims Court arbitrator, and Civil Court Judge. Did you always aspire to be a judge? What do you like about the law? Well, I went into international studies at Long Island University and graduated with a perfect 3.9 grade point average but I could not get a job at the United Nations. I decided to apply to law school and was admitted to St. John’s University School of Law. When I got to law school, that was when I realized that the judge is the one that really gets a person’s life and I wanted to be part of that. I just like being involved in dispute resolution.

How long have you been in the neighborhood? Ten years. But I go back to my earliest childhood when I attended a home-based art class here. Those memories of this neighborhood energize, cleanse and satisfy. The iconcoctions are also delicious.

The Brooklyn Greenery: There’s More To It Than Just Healthy Food

The Brooklyn Greenery aims to raise the bar on serving fresh, healthy food in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, and the two young entrepreneurs behind the venture possess the right attitude and intelligence to keep the bar high. Founded by partners Jason Young and Augustin Marroquin, the Brooklyn Greenery is equal parts healthy food emporium, politically- and environmentally-correct discussion hall, book exchange and even a live music and spoken word venue.

The Brooklyn Greenery: There’s More To It Than Just Healthy Food

The Brooklyn Greenery aims to raise the bar on serving fresh, healthy food in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, and the two young entrepreneurs behind the venture possess the right attitude and intelligence to keep the bar high. Founded by partners Jason Young and Augustin Marroquin, the Brooklyn Greenery is equal parts healthy food emporium, politically- and environmentally-correct discussion hall, book exchange and even a live music and spoken word venue.

The Brooklyn Greenery: There’s More To It Than Just Healthy Food

The Brooklyn Greenery aims to raise the bar on serving fresh, healthy food in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, and the two young entrepreneurs behind the venture possess the right attitude and intelligence to keep the bar high. Founded by partners Jason Young and Augustin Marroquin, the Brooklyn Greenery is equal parts healthy food emporium, politically- and environmentally-correct discussion hall, book exchange and even a live music and spoken word venue.