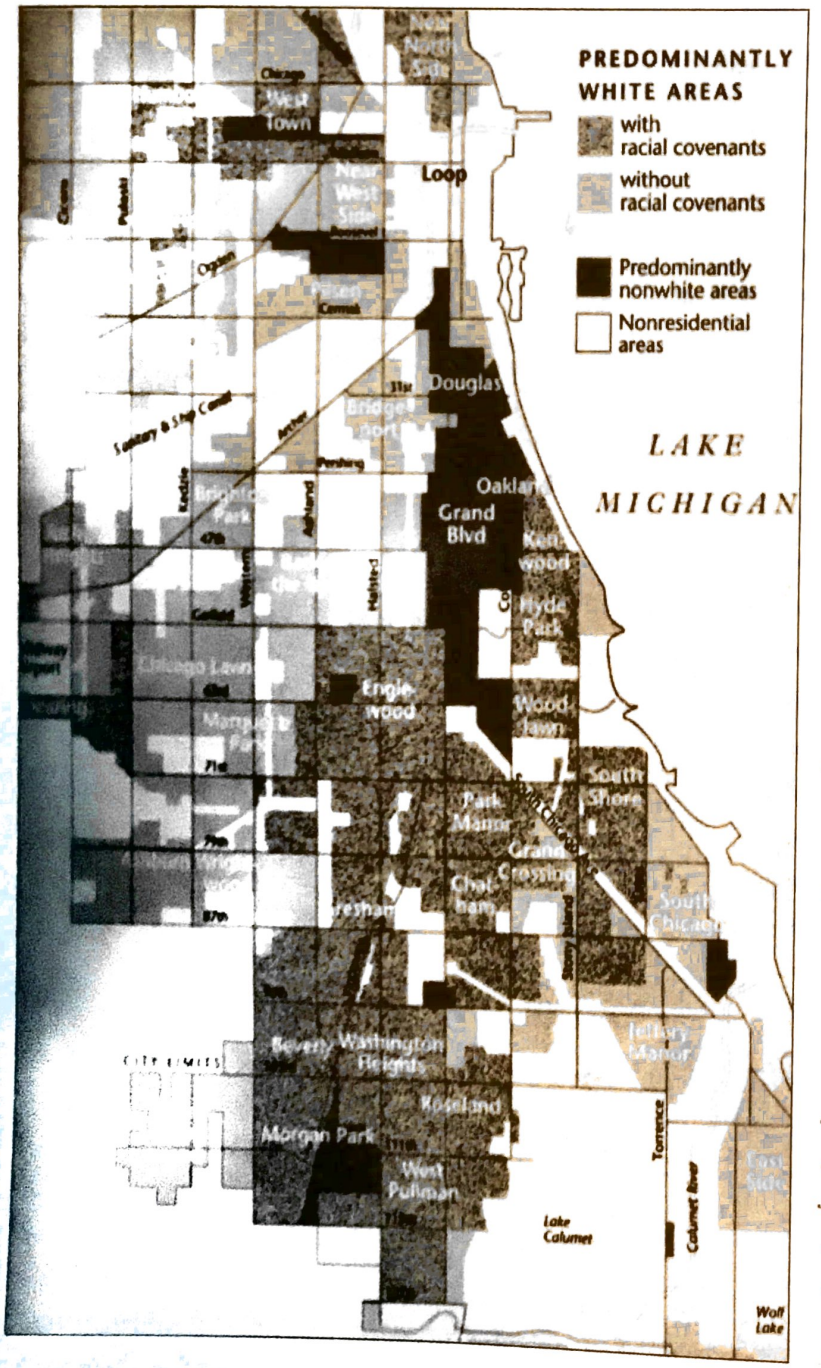
Welcome to Part 3 of 5

The Rise of a Dual Housing Market and Extreme Segregation (1917—1940s)

The new strategies of segregation that evolved in Chicago during the 1920s to 1940s and that predominated in the post-WWII era were more sophisticated than ever before. These are the policies that shaped the Chicago of today as the most segregated U.S. city.

In 1917, the **Chicago Real Estate Board** (CREB) decided to respond to the "invasion of white residence districts by the Negroes," as they put it, and quietly declared Chicago to be a segregated city. Instead of advancing housing equity, ensuring safe and dignified living conditions, or building a truly democratic multi-cultural society, the real estate powers sought to support White ethnic enclaves and confine Blacks folks to the vast **Black Belt**. Many Chinese were pushed into a small **Chinatown** district, and Mexicans into four local pockets.



Map showing "restrictive covenants" in place throughout Chicago; see map key to the right.

By 1924, the CREB pushed the National Association of Real Estate Board to adopt the pioneering racial codes and block club structures that helped carve out a **dual housing market**: What's a dual housing market? Essentially, it was low prices and multiple housing choices for White buyers while Black and other families paid higher prices with minimal choices in Black-only (other-only) areas. This dual housing market, to a large extent, still plagues Chicago. It was established by systematizing racist tactics from business higher-ups in unison with local White block club residents.

One such club, the Hamburg Athletic Club resided in **Bridgeport** and was led by a young **Richard J. Daley** from 1924 to 1939. Although not explicitly known as a real estate block club, this Irish gang engaged in sports, conducted Democratic Machine activities, and viciously attacked Blacks and other ethnic groups who stepped foot in Bridgeport. This became their strategy for maintaining segregation (See *American Pharaoh*).

Another tactic, **restrictive covenants**, were already in effect by the early 1900s against Jews, but they became legally binding documents in the 1920s. In essence, these covenants were racial agreements between and amongst landlords, real estate agents, and home sellers stating that, "at no time shall said premise…be sold, occupied, let or leased…to anyone of any race other than Caucasian." By the 1940s, Chicago led the nation in applying and upholding these insidious documents—restricting thousands of Black

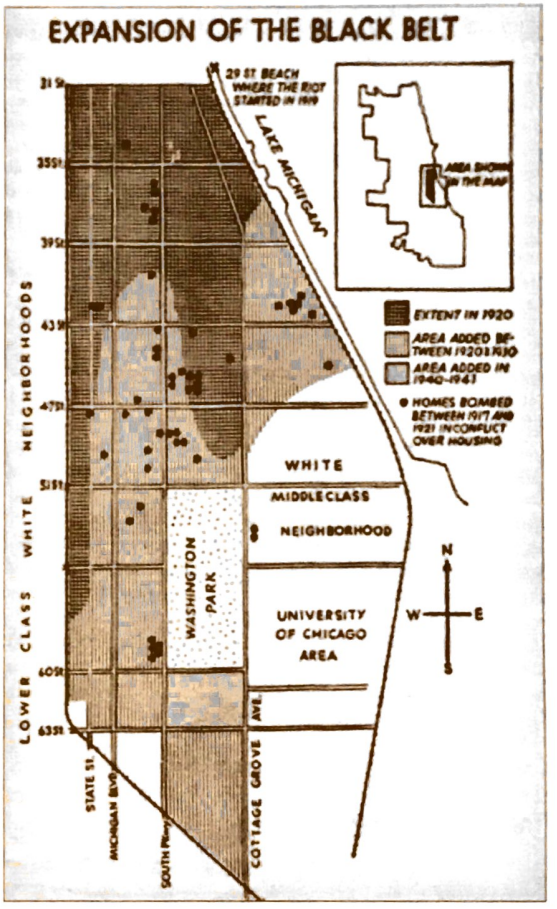
families with money to purchase good homes from establishing themselves almost anywhere except the ghettoized space of **Bronzeville, Grand Boulevard and further south (also called "Black Metropolis").** Unlike the tactic of brute force employed by working class White communities such as Bridgeport and South Deering, restrictive covenants were enacted in middle and upper class White residences with more access to necessary legal tools, such as lawyers, courts, and legalize documents. This upper class access also included the rising desires to live lavishly, or, "high on the hog."

The Gilded Age—a Time of Extreme Wealth and Materialism for Some (1920s) turns into the Great Depression—a Time of Extreme Poverty for Many (1930s)

As real estate interests continued to develop the Chicago area and leading industries continued their march towards the multi-millionaires club, the United States entered what's referred to as the **Gilded Age**. Business was booming. Corporate stocks began to soar. Pegg (Chicgo Real Estate Board) mentions how "getting-rich-quick had become the national pastime. Money was available for speculation."

One popular "get rich" scheme had to do with selling a person a sheet of paper called a bond. During these boom times, many real estate developers offered small bonds (a sort of investment) at cheap rates so middle and working class people could own a small piece of a larger property. The developer would raise enough money using this method to get all his money out, still own the property, and invest the money in new deals. The small-time investors "never received statements of how the property was managed and were unaware of unpaid tax bills and declining rents. Because the bonds were not listed in any public market, the owners had no way of knowing their true value," explains Pegg (CREB).

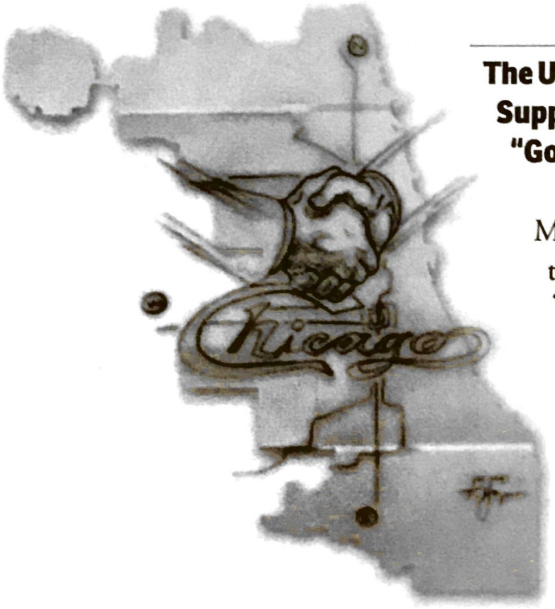
Then—it hit! The Crash of 1929. A series of economic events left people in desperate economic times of evictions, foreclosures, long food lines, homelessness, hustling, and Hoovervilles. Chicago's great Hooverville was built at the "foot" of Randolph Street with hundreds of makeshift or cardboard shelters with newspaper blankets in the cold winters. In 1931, the Bailiff's Office had to forcibly evict 1,400 families. Many suffered this fate—and worse. By 1932, 750,000 people were unemployed; as studies showed, Chicagoans had taken one of the hardest hits—that is mostly poor, working, and middle class Chicago. Some of these were among those hustled by Chicago realtors. Many didn't collect a dime on the property bonds they purchased in the 1920s as the properties went into default. Most people lost out.



Map showing the expansion of the Black Belt, South Side; dots represent housing bombing against Black families; see map key above.

Another small real estate class, one with the means to capitalize on this horrible situation, saw the Depression as a great blessing to receive the homes people lost. They could take these foreclosed homes over, buy low, rent it out, manage it, and sell higher later. One Chicago real estate group, **Baird & Warner** did just this—and greatly increased their building management department in the Depression. It did quite well… "increasing during the Depression as the court appointed the firm to act as receiver for many foreclosures." CREB also stated that Baird & Warner opened three new branches in **South Shore, Hyde Park**, and **Oak Park**, then an exclusive sales office in **Winnetka** (1933). Simultaneously, many Chicagoans became

homeless & jobless. As for Black folks during the Depression, needless to say, it was tough times.



The "Good Ole Boys" deal; artwork by Terrence T.z Eye Haymer.

The U.S. Government (FHA) Supports Chicago's "Good Ole Boys" Racism

Making matters worse, the U.S. Government established the **Federal Housing Administration (FHA),** which adopted a series of policies so that the dual housing market (e.g., great homes for Whites in the suburbs and inner-city segregation for Blacks mostly confined to a rental market) would prevail across the United States. In summary, the FHA insured bank loans for home mortgages based on a racist ranking system with A (green) being the highest ranking and D (red) the lowest. Banks and saving and loans institutions wanted their loans insured by the FHA, letting them off the hook if the mortgage went bad. If a bank could not secure FHA insurance, they would not make the loan. So how did this play out to support a dual housing system? Beryl Satter explains in *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America,* explains

…[T]he FHA uncritically incorporated racist ideas then current in the home appraisal industry. In the 1930s the U.S. appraisal industry opposed the "mixing" of the races, which it believed would cause "the decline of both the human race and of property values." Appraisers ensured segregation through their property ranking system…A ratings went to properties located in "homogenous" areas—ones that (in one appraiser's words) lacked even a "single foreigner or Negro." … If a neighborhood had black residents it was marked as D, or red, no matter what their social class or how small a percentage of the population they made up. Those neighborhood properties were appraised as worthless or likely to decline in value. In short, D areas were "redlined" or marked as locations in which no loans should be made for either purchasing or upgrading properties.

Satter continues to explain how the FHA's official *Underwriting Manual* overtly supported, even insisted upon, restrictive covenants as "the surest protection against undesirable encroachment" of "inharmonious racial groups." Through these practices, countless Black families were **redlined**, chained to impoverished living conditions and completely held back from becoming property owners, just as mortgages were being offered at extremely low rates to Whites. In fact, with a $550 down payment (which many, if not most Black families could afford since most worked and pooled their funds), a family could purchase a $5000 home and only pay $29.61 a month. Renting, which most Blacks were forced to do, cost about $50 a month in Chicago at this time—almost twice as much! This begs the question: If there were more equality, how many Black families would have been able to pass on property and wealth to the next generations like Whites have done? The answer is most likely in the tens of thousands in Chicago alone. Instead, Black communities were redlined and the wealth flowed into White hands.

These racist practices, however, did not go unchallenged. As Satter points out, "Black activists were quick to challenge these discriminatory policies." One such protest, among others, came from **William Robert Ming Jr.**, a Black attorney and NAACP member. In pointing out that no evidence existed to support the exclusion of loans to Blacks based on not caring for property as Whites had or based on being a risky loan target, Ming said, "Application to both Negroes and whites of the same rules as to personal credit standing as a prerequisite to

making loans would appear to solve much of the concern over comparative risks." The FHA chose not to heed this, or many other proposed solutions of equal treatment for many years to come.

Faced with inequalities in all directions, the segregation and unequal treatment of African Americans migrating to Chicago produced serious poverty, overcrowding, and slum living (as you'll see in the coming pages). Yet, these forces also contributed to the growth of a thriving tightly-knit community where pan-African / Black thought, culture and self-determination rose through adversity. On the South Side, Black activism, churches, media and politics took root and Black-owned businesses became prominent. By 1920, with the Black population at 109,594 Chicago became known as the "promised land" for weary migrants leaving the Jim Crow south for a place where greater degrees of freedom and opportunities for uplift existed, a place also referred to as **Black Metropolis**. This metropolis would grow to 277,731 Black residents by 1940—still just the beginning of Black population growth here. With this growth came severe growing pains as well as great times.

Photograph by Bob Kotalik, Chicago Sun Times, 1953

A Black family sits in front of their home on the South Side.

Building Black Metropolis:
Bronzeville, the Black Belt, and Self-Reliance During Tough Times

What was life like for the hundreds of thousands of residents in "The Black Metropolis" (Bronzeville and the Black Belt)? While the snapshot to follow will not reveal every aspect of life for the community's Black residents, it does highlight some key historical facts and landmarks.

As with any other ethnic group in the United States, there were/are class divisions (rich, middle, working and low-income people) within the Black community. Divisions by class have always existed in capitalist societies and the United States has been no different. There has always been a greater number of Whites reaching the middle and upper classes due to systematic efforts to make it that way. In Bronzeville, people from all economic levels, social interests and skills lived, struggled and worked to reach a more dignified and stable place in life while facing systemic oppression head-on. In places like Chicago and Harlem, NY during the 1920s to the 1950s, Black cultural traditions blossomed like never before even after enduring hundreds of years of slavery. The classic text to review this history in Chicago is *Black Metropolis* (vol. 1 and 2) by **St. Clair Drake** and **Horace R. Cayton**, two outstanding Black scholars living in Black Metropolis during these times. Say the authors in vol. 2…

Stand in the center of the Black Belt—at Chicago's 47th St. and South Parkway. Around you swirls a continuous eddy of faces—black, brown, olive, yellow, and white. Soon you will realize that this is not "just another neighborhood" of Midwest Metropolis. On a spring or summer day this spot, "47th and South Park," is the urban equivalent of a village square… There is a continuous and colorful movement here—shoppers streaming in and out of stores; insurance agents turning in their collections at a funeral parlor; club reporters rushing into a newspaper office with their social notes; irate tenants filing complaints with the Office of

Price Administration; job-seekers moving in and out of the United States Employment Office. Today, a picket line may be calling attention to the "unfair labor practices" of a merchant. Tomorrow, a girl may be selling tags on the corner for a hospital or community house. The next day, you will find a group of boys soliciting signatures to place a Negro on the All-Star football team. And always a beggar or two will be in the background—a blind man, cup in hand, tapping his way along, or a legless veteran propped up against the side of a building. This is Bronzeville's central shopping district…

From bustling businesses to education, to newspaper publishing (see full list below), Black activism has been a force in the fight for equal rights, fair treatment and full dignity. A true testament of this fight lies in the work of the **Chicago Council of Negro Organizations** (CCNO), which formed as a unified coalition of over 100 Black organizations including churches, women's clubs, civic groups, and lodges. The CCNO fought, especially under the more radical leadership of **Irene McCoy Gaines** (CCNO president from 1939 to '53), for more jobs, better housing conditions, an end to restrictive covenants, and improvements for Black teachers and students.

With survival, service, and uplift at the heart of the matter, let's take a closer look at Black life in this metropolis. We begin with…

Awareness and Education: With firm roots in the Black liberation struggle against slavery (both mental and physical), Black pride and African-centered thought was on the rise in the early- to mid-1900s. In addition to critical newspapers, such as the *Chicago Defender* (see Media / Publishing below), contributions by Chicagoans and frequenters of Chicago's South Side such as Carter G. Woodson, Paul Robeson, W.E.B. DuBois, Horace Cayton, Allison Davis, St. Clair Drake, and Melville Herskovits advanced this powerful awareness. These intellectual activists enlightened people on the historical significance of Africa and the great contributions of African Americans—placing the Black struggle in the U.S. within a larger struggle against **colonialism** and **imperialism** around the world. Carter G. Woodson's Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) helped solidify the growth of Black and African-centered curriculum by Black teachers in Bronzeville. Parkway Community House was "one of the leading intellectual centers of Bronzeville." The Citizens Schools Committee protested overcrowded schools and other inequalities. The YMCA on 39th and Wabash was a popular meeting place for a number of these intellectuals. These efforts gave rise to powerful feelings of Black pride and self-respect that had been limited, even crushed, by the institutions of slavery, racism, and **Eurocentric mis-education**. Another driving force behind this growing movement for Black pride and nationhood was **Marcus Garvey**. As Dempsey Travis described it in *An Autobiography of Black Chicago*, "Garveyism generated more serious street talk than any other subject along 'The Stroll'…in the 1920s. (South State Street)"

Right: Father and daughter embrace education before time runs out; artwork by Terrence T.zeye Haymer.

Arts and Literature: The Chicago Black Renaissance, while lesser-known than the Harlem Renaissance, thrived for thirty years and produced outstanding contributions to music, dance, drama, poetry, literature, visual arts and social protest. Its foundations, in part, lay in the pan-Africanism and activism described above. One group, the **South Side Community**

Arts Center (SSCAC) was organized by Black women, such as **Margaret Burroughs,** who went on to establish the first Black arts museum in the country (now the **DuSable Museum**). Other cultural and arts institutions, such as the **George Cleveland Hall Library** and the **Federal Theater Project** also emerged during this time. Other notable figures of the Chicago Black Renaissance include Lorraine Hansberry, Gwendolyn Brooks, Richard Wright, Margaret Walker, Katherine Dunham and Richard Durham. Hansberry's book, *Raisin in the Sun*, tackled Black family life, racial segregation, and rising pan-African pride with an eloquence and rawness that both inspired Blacks and shook Whites. The story was based on her family's realities in Chicago. (See pg 81 for an excerpt.) Langston Hughes, the great poet, writer, and activist mostly associated with Harlem, also spent many years in Chicago. He wrote for the *Chicago Defender* newspaper, among other contributions.

Business and Employment: It has been known in the United States that during tough economic times, Black folks are "the first to be fired and the last to be hired." Even by 1920, about 20% of Black people in Chicago were unemployed. During tougher times such as the Great Depression (1929 and 1930s), Blacks sought to make a living by engaging in small businesses, such as junk collection, peddling vegetables, selling door to door, barbecue stands, and dealing in ice or coal. Before this, available jobs and small business enterprises for Blacks were mostly in services for Whites (e.g., domestic house service), barber shops, and train car porters. Black businesses reached a peak in 1929, fell during the Great Depression, and then rapidly regained footing in the 1940s. Still, in 1938 there were 2,600 Black owned businesses in Bronzeville. In this metropolis, Black folks seized on opportunities to build a loyal economic base and secure a small business. The rallying call became "**Double Duty Dollar**," which emphasized spending money with Black-owned businesses. One example,

Slum housing and children playing in the Black Belt, South Side, 1930s.

Morris Eat Shop on 410 East 47th Street, was probably the most popular Black restaurant of the time. It was described in the 1940s by Grace Outlaw as such: it had a "modernistic scheme in furnishing…the food is excellent and the place is immaculately kept."

Even with this Black economic growth, the reality of White-owned businesses, including most of the profitable ones, still existed. In 1939, sixty five percent of all businesses on the Southeast Side were White-owned. Three fourths of all merchants in Bronzeville were Jewish, which led to anti-Semitic feelings and activism around this time. No other Black business was as profitable as the Policy Wheels (the roots for today's lottery). Policy produced the Black millionaires of the 1930s—men like "Giver Dam" Jones and his brother Teenam, the Kelly brothers, Pop Lewis, and possibly the most successful policy group– the **Jones brothers** (Eddie, George and McKissick). Policy games also fueled thousands of jobs, a new publishing industry ("dream books," which translated bad dreams into policy numbers-like a premonition), and fueled the hopes of hundreds of thousands of players.

Healthcare: The first Black owned and operated hospital in the United States was on

Chicago's South Side. Founded in 1891, **Provident Hospital** was first located at 29th and Dearborn, then another site, later moving to 426 East 51st Street. Its founder, **Dr. Daniel Hale Williams**, was the first African American cardiologist and first person to successfully perform open-heart surgery in the U.S. Another important healthcare institution for Black residents was the **Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People**, also called the Old Folks' Home. It was opened and supported mostly through the hard work of Black women in 1898 (see Black women's clubs below). These institutions were established in response to the denial of health services to Black people. Due to limited services, combined with extreme overcrowding and all the problems accompanying both of these, the Black community suffered far more from diseases and ailments like tuberculosis (TB). During the 1920s, the rates of TB for Whites dropped to 60 people per 100,000. For Mexicans, it was 400. For Blacks, this disease ravaged 1,000 people per 100,000. This is one example of a variety of health problems faced in the Black Belt. Although, mainstream newspapers sought to stereotype all Blacks as unhealthy by spreading fears that Blacks posed a threat to general public health, Black newspapers helped rally the community around establishing independent institutions while challenging healthcare segregation in Chicago.

Media / Publishing: The first Black newspaper in Chicago, the *Conservator*, was founded in 1878 by a young Black lawyer and son of a slave. Others soon followed, such as *The Whip, Appeal, Clipper, Free Speech, Church Organ, Broad Ax,* and *Defender.* By the early 1940s, five weekly newspapers were being published in Bronzeville: the *Chicago Defender* (weekly national circulation, 160,000); the *Chicago Bee* (8,000); the *Chicago World* (5,000); the *Metropolitan Post* (3,000); and the *News-Ledger* (30,000). Also of importance, the *Pittsburg Courier* was sold in Chicago (10,000). These papers were "by far the most important agencies for forming and reflecting public opinion in Black Metropolis." Of these, the *Defender* stood the test of time (est. in 1905) and became the most established Black newspaper. Its founder, **Robert S. Abbott**, was an impassioned "Race Man," which meant that he emphasized the strength and development of the Black community and spoke against racist injustices. Mr. Abbott, just before his death, emphasized his one major goal in life: "complete equality for Negroes with white people."

Music and Entertainment: Chicago is certainly known for "good times"—regardless of one's cultural roots—and music is usually connected to "good times." In thinking about the world of entertainment, Drake and Cayton say:

Bronzeville's people have never let poverty, disease, and discrimination "get them down." *The vigor with which they enjoy life seems to belie the gloomy observations of the statisticians and civic leaders who know the facts about the Black Ghetto.* ***In the Lean Years as well as the Fat, Bronzeville has shared the general American interest of "having a good time."*** *Its people like the movies and shows, athletic events, dancing, card playing, and the other recreational activities—commercial and non-commercial—which Midwest Metropolis offers...* ***For the people of Bronzeville, 'having a good time' also serves another function—escape from the tensions of contact with white people.***

These good times rolled on at local "rent parties" and inside taverns, cafes, and night clubs. The headquarters for Chicago's famous **blues** scene stood between 31st Street and 43rd Street. Most blues artists from the Mississippi Delta were relocating to Chicago, musicians such as **Muddy Waters** (known as the king of

Chicago blues). **B.B. King** and **Little Milton** regularly played here as well. On the West Side, **Howlin' Wolf** would dominate the scene with a powerful voice and more down home style. Starting with the 1893 World's Fair, the **jazz movement** also elevated itself here—with its roots in ragtime pianists from New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta. Hence, the Chicago-New Orleans-Delta connection was born and Chicago became the jazz mecca of the world. Cornetists and band leaders, such as **Freddie Keppard, Manuel Perez** and **Joseph "King" Oliver,** helped lay the jazz foundation. Yet, for some in Black Metropolis, no music touched the spirit as profoundly as **gospel** music; and there is still only one place where gospel music shines with "the spirit of the Lord." Church. Taking its musical cue from jazz and blues, its lyrical cue from evangelical hymns, and old spirituals, "gospel music" was coined here in the early 1920s by **Thomas Andrew Dorsey.** By 1931, he helped form the first gospel choir—situated in Ebenezer Baptist Church. Other great contributors include **Mahalia Jackson, Roberta Martin** and **Sallie Martin**. Later, **Don Cornelius** launched *Soul Train.* Chicago's South Side has been attributed with being the nation's center of authentic blues, jazz, and gospel music performance and recordings for nearly 100 years.

Religious Institutions: By 1945, Black Metropolis had nearly 500 churches, claiming more than 200,000 residents from 30 or more denominations. Most were affiliated with one of the two **Negro National Baptist Conventions**. Over 75% of them were storefront churches. More than a place of worship, most Black religious institutions were seen as "Race churches" where community needs were met, injustices were challenged, and preachers moved their congregations to take action around issues such as equal job opportunities, school inequalities, and other timely happenings. As Drake and Cayton state, "...the Negro church is largely free of white control...Most of Bronzeville's preachers are answerable to no one except their congregations." It was, they continue, "the most powerful single institution in terms of wealth and mass support" in the Black community. Women such as **Elder Lucy Smith, Mary Evans,** and **Dorothy Sutton** led some of these influential Black churches with their "tremendous organizational and fund-raising skills, thereby enabling them to establish social services for their congregations" explains Anne Meis Krupfer, in *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism.*

Sports and Recreation: Two stories stand out: the **Chicago American Giants** and **Chicago Giants** of the Negro leagues (various) and boxing great, **Jack Johnson**, the first internationally recognized Black heavy weight champion of the world. Mr. Johnson, who resided in Chicago, became the "Great Black Hope" in his victory on December 26, 1908. He then defeated the "White Hope", Jim Jeffries, on July 4, 1910. These events were interpreted as a "Black Manifesto" against White supremacy. These sporting bouts led to great celebrations in Black communities across the country. They also sparked White riots with bricks and bottle throwing, as well as police suppression against celebrating Blacks. Johnson used his social fame and status to break ground—partly fueled by his own personal preferences. One such area was marrying White women, which he did three times, and which landed Johnson in prison for a year and a day after a law was passed in 1919 (Mann Act) targeting Johnson's relations. His victory, however, produced a great deal of pride among many Black Chicagoans.

"On the West Side, Howlin' Wolf would dominate the scene with a powerful voice and more down home style."

From boxing to baseball, the will to establish Black success and independence was on the rise. By 1920, **Andrew "Rube" Foster**, owner of the Chicago American Giants, helped establish the Negro National League, patterned after East coast Negro leagues. Pioneers such as Mr. Foster

brought baseball opportunity to Chicago's Black community. By 1933, the first East-West All Star Colored All-Star Game was held at Comiskey Park in front of 20,000 fans.

Women's Clubs: Often overlooked and undervalued, women have been called the "backbone" of many great historical events and movements. This is certainly the case with Black women. In Chicago, Black women's clubs served a critical role in their mostly South Side communities. With roots in the Ida B. Wells Club (est. in 1893), the North Side Women's Club (est. in 1901 by Wells), and the Old Settlers' Club (an elite club of men and women composed of Chicago's first Black residents), Black women's clubs flourished in multiple kinds of community engagements. Spearheaded by **CNDA, the Chicago and Northern District Association of Colored Women's Clubs**, mostly middle class women, who also engaged with the NAACP and Chicago Urban League, worked on child and youth welfare, family building, equalizing schools, developing Black history curriculum, improving housing, cultural contributions, political activism, fundraising for important Black institutions (e.g., Provident Hospital, the Old Folks' Home, Phyllis Wheatley Home), and more. By 1928, there were over 2,700 women in 67 clubs across Chicago. Their work continued into the 1930s to the 1960s with at least 80 active clubs and over 25 clubs for young girls, says Knupfer in *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism.* Knupfer's thorough review of Chicago's leading Black women of this time sheds light on many women including one in particular, **Irene McCoy Gaines.** Mentioned above, Gaines worked tirelessly for Black social uplift, Black history curriculum, and political power. Knupfer says, "One always knew where Gaines stood on any issue, whether it was overcrowded schools, substandard housing, black women's lack of employment opportunities, or black women's worldwide exploitation. Regardless of her political aspirations, she never compromised her beliefs."

Portrait of Irene McCoy Gaines, one of the most active and respected leaders in the Black community at this time

These nine areas encapsulate just some of the contributions and life in Black Metropolis during tough times. While horrid living conditions were endured, the Black communities' strong beliefs, active people, service-oriented groups, artistic renaissance, good times, and independent institutions defined Bronzeville. Yet, even as Blacks bought homes and planted roots, their lands were about to be targeted for **slum clearance**. **The University of Chicago**, a rising giant on Chicago's South Side, began to fine-tune its plans for local exclusivity, citywide urban planning, and the birth of high impact urban renewal.

Resource note: for a sweeping documentary, see the video, *From DuSable to Obama* which covers the founding of Chicago by Jean Baptiste Point du Sable through the period we just read about up to 2009. It is a powerful story of the history of Black struggle, migration, culture, community, despair, and hope in Chicago, only available through PBS.

"Goin to Chicago" Consider, too, a 6+grade level book called Color Me Dark: A Great Migration Story.

Mastering Tricks of the Trade in Hyde Park: University of Chicago and its Urban Renewal Plans

Even with all of the cultural institutions, organizations, and developments under way in the Black community, the expansion of Black Metropolis was not wanted in elite Hyde Park.

Postcard: panoramic view of the University of Chicago in Hyde Park,1915.

As early as 1921, says Travis, "the Hyde Park Owners Association launched a campaign to move out the 1,000 black families who were living between 39th and 55th streets, between Lake Michigan and Cottage Grove Avenue. They tried to move them into the old defined 'Black Belt'...but they learned that many had paid cash money for their property...and there was no legal way to move them out." This didn't stop the University of Chicago.

In preparation for "eventual ownership of the entire area," as a University of Chicago (U of C) Treasurer's Office report stated in 1949, a combined set of pivotal land and population control strategies, tools, and actions were taken within a twenty five year period that eventually impacted not only Hyde Park, but all of Chicago and the entire nation. The University felt dire actions must be taken to keep working class people of color, especially Black folks, out of the area so as to preserve the future of U of C's campus and surrounding community.

The University of Chicago and Hyde Park had shared a common bond for many years. Hyde Park was an exclusive suburb of Chicago well into the 1800s, with a university meant to rival East coast "ivy league" counterparts. Originally established in 1859, U of C was re-built in 1892 by John D. Rockefeller, the oil tycoon and one of the world's most powerful businessmen. Since then, the University has had a special domineering, relationship with Chicago. Visiting the University of Chicago is like entering an Old English world of prestige and elitism with stone temples of learning, manicured landscapes, castle-like wooden doors, and a grand cathedral—Rockefeller Chapel.

Due to the Great Migration and segregation, the University sat just blocks away from thousands of oppressed residents crammed into the Black Belt. In 1933, the University again decided to keep "undesirables" out of Hyde Park "by all honorable means," as Robert Hutchins, president of U of C, stated. What were some of those honorable means? A short summary of strategies is presented in *Making the Second Ghetto* where **Arnold Hirsch** reveals the role of U of C in the land grabs in and around Hyde Park. These strategies have been

replicated in communities across the country. While reading, consider how much energy was placed into restricting, segregating, displacing, and destroying the homes of people of color versus investing in the development of housing equality for everyone.

University of Chicagos' Strategies of Urban Renewal and Exclusivity for Hyde Park:

1. 1933: Establish a Private Fund: U of C invests $110,923 for legal and community interests to keep **"undesirables"** out. Funds were used to advance restrictive covenants, evict "three groups of Mexicans," and delay for 7 years, the changing of Washington Park from White to Black.

2. 1937: Control the Media Messages: U of C's local newspaper, the *Chicago Maroon*, prints strategic messages to promote the racist desires of U of C. Here's an example: "To maintain its greatness, Negroes must be excluded from the district around the campus…"

3. 1940s: Launch Community/Property Based Entities: The Woodlawn Property Owners' League and Hyde Park Property Owners' Association are started by U of C to manipulate activities "behind the scenes."

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Vhat effects did these
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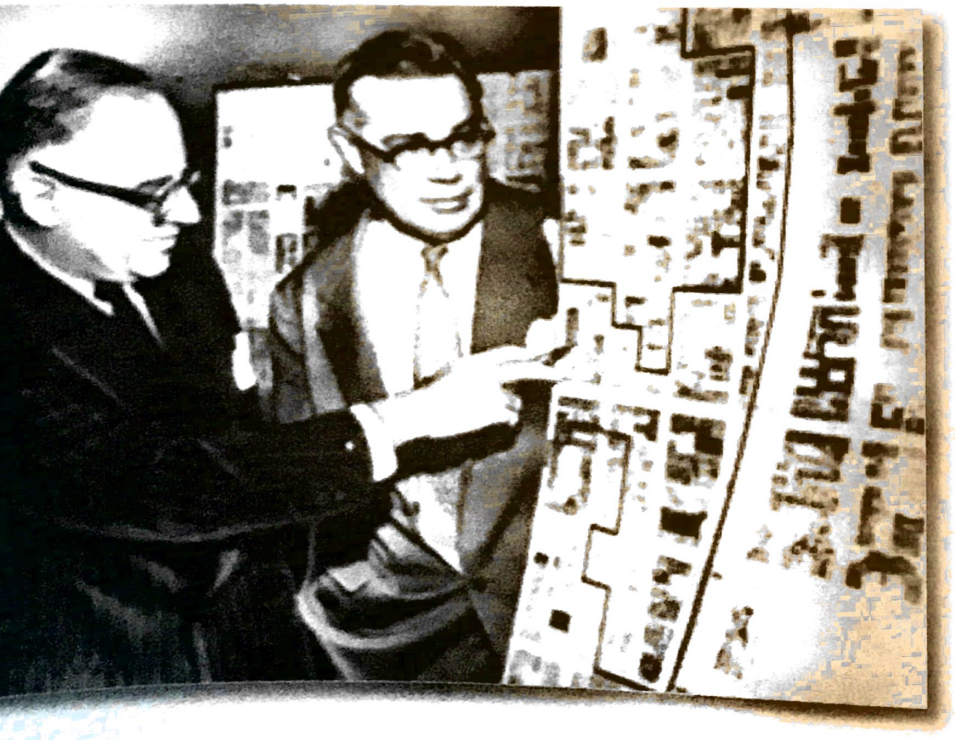


4. 1940s-50s: Craft Desired Legal Tools / Legislation: To take control of local development and push urban renewal, removal, and conservation plans, Chicago's power players, led in part by the U of C Law School, craft the *Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act (aka, Urban Renewal Act of '47) and the Urban Community Conservation Act ('53)*—both of which help set a national agenda and lead to key federal legislation (e.g., Housing Act of 1954).

5. 1949: Release Instructive Reports: To control Hyde Park's future, a U of C Treasurer's Office report in '49 recommended to: 1) spend $200,000 a year to "eliminate the most undesirable buildings or residents"; 2) make rents higher to "maintain the white population"; and 3) form the South West Hyde Park Redevelopment Corporation, to "renew" local areas.

6. 1949: Influence/Control Block Clubs to Mobilize for Desired Community Plans: U of C worked with and influenced the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference (HPKCC)—a group of more liberal-minded block club volunteers—to advance major urban renewal plans with minor levels of accepted Black integration. HPKCC served as a public outlet for U of C plans.

7. 1952: Establish a Powerful Entity to Implement Master plans: The South East Chicago Commission was created by U of C as the official body of power to advance urban renewal plans. They sensationalized crime as a scare tactic to mobilize White middle class residents to support "renewal." The SECC, over the next 20 years, succeeded in reducing Hyde Park's overall population—especially of Black residents and raising the overall medium income.

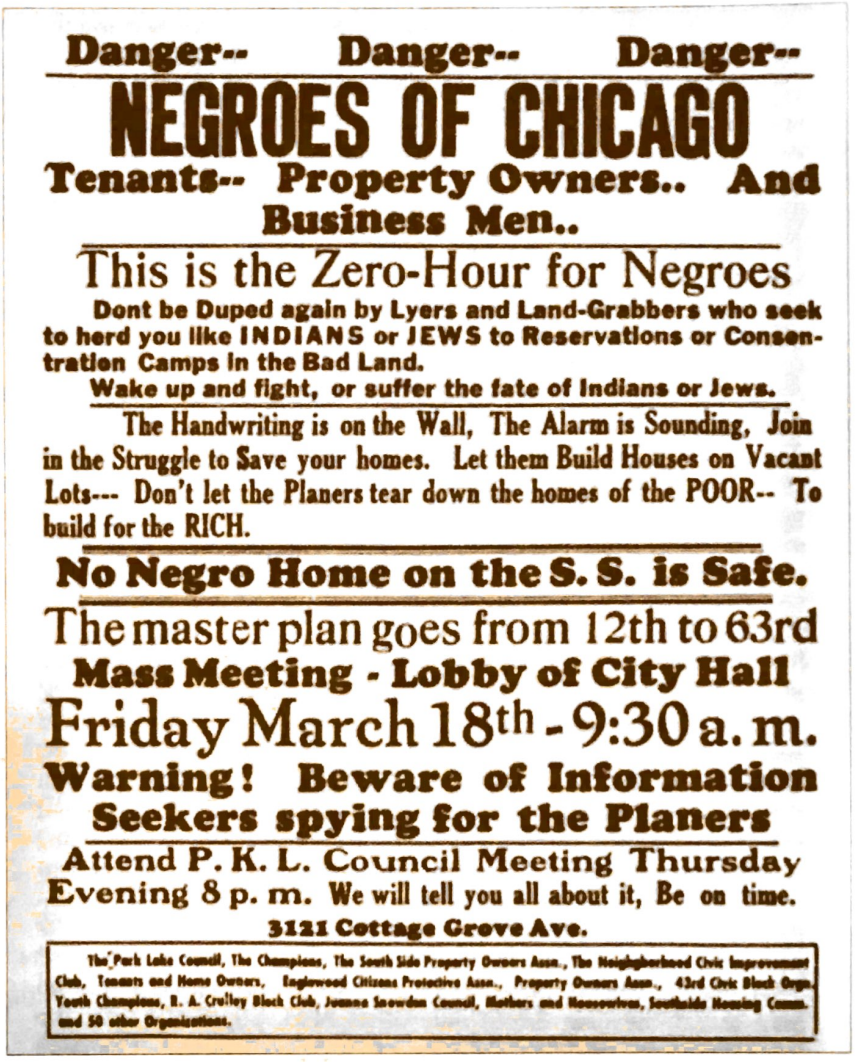
8. 1952: Sensationalize Crime to Justify Displacing Undesirable Residents: Stoking racial fears has been a tactic of white supremacy in the U.S. for centuries. U of C purposely employed this tactic in Hyde Park to create the SECC and

speed up urban renewal. According to U of C Chancellor Lawrence Kimpton, "We used a rather sensational kidnapping and attempted rape case to bring the community together and announce a plan for the organization of the [SECC]."

9. 1958: Release a Grand Plan with Appealing Terminology: The 1958 Urban Renewal Plan was released by the SECC to affect development in Hyde Park, Kenwood-Oakland, and Woodlawn. It was supported by Mayor Richard J. Daley and passed by the City Council.

10. 1960s: Claim Victory and Invoke a Sense of Progress and Racial Harmony: The "noble experiment" of Hyde Park being somewhat integrated by including a small Black middle class, which fought for their own survival, was highlighted by terms such as "integration" and "acculturation" to show that U of C was more progressive-minded than their private plans showed

Throughout the 1920s to 60s—and today—U of C leaders privately developed these and other steps of action to sustain their vision of Hyde Park. A vision, they felt, was necessary to the survival of the University. Subsequently, their work instructed other pro-urban renewal forces in communities such as Uptown, Lincoln Park, and Oak Park (a suburban example) to do the same. In Uptown, for instance, the Uptown Chicago Commission was launched in 1952, with striking similarity to the South East Chicago Commission. In Lincoln Park, it was DePaul University, another elite academic institution, which led the way in displacing "undesirable" residents and securing the **burgeoning** White middle class enclave in existence today. As for the South Side, however, there were still other forces during the 1940s and 50s that opposed Black residential growth. These people and entities launched massive land grabs with dire results for Chicago's Black community. Combined with the University of Chicago, key downtown interests elevated urban renewal and "Negro removal" to a new level.



Danger-- Danger-- Danger--

NEGROES OF CHICAGO

Tenants-- Property Owners.. And Business Men..

This is the Zero-Hour for Negroes

Dont be Duped again by Lyers and Land-Grabbers who seek to herd you like INDIANS or JEWS to Reservations or Consentration Camps in the Bad Land.

Wake up and fight, or suffer the fate of Indians or Jews.

The Handwriting is on the Wall, The Alarm is Sounding, Join in the Struggle to Save your homes. Let them Build Houses on Vacant Lots--- Don't let the Planers tear down the homes of the POOR-- To build for the RICH.

No Negro Home on the S. S. is Safe.

The master plan goes from 12th to 63rd

Mass Meeting - Lobby of City Hall

Friday March 18th - 9:30 a.m.

Warning! Beware of Information Seekers spying for the Planers

Attend P. K. L. Council Meeting Thursday Evening 8 p. m. We will tell you all about it, Be on time.

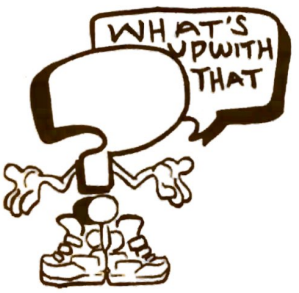
3121 Cottage Grove Ave.

The Park Lake Council, The Champions, The South Side Property Owners Assn., The Neighborhood Civic Improvement Club, Tenants and Home Owners, Englewood Citizens Protective Assn., Property Owners Assn., 43rd Civic Block Orgn. Youth Champions, E. A. Crolley Block Club, Jeanne Snowden Council, Mothers and Housewives, Southside Housing Comm. and 50 other Organizations.

Widely distributed poster produced by many Black property owners' clubs and local associations (over 60) warning Black families of the coming land assault, 1947.

The Elevation of Urban Renewal and Its Lingo: Blight, Slum Clearance, Conservation, Redevelopment, and Revitalization

In response to the Great Depression, Chicago business owners and real estate speculators organized powerful planning coalitions and utilized the power of the local government to create new conditions for profit. One of these growth coalitions was established in 1934, the **Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council (MHPC)**, as an organization of wealthy realtors, lawyers, bankers, architects, and downtown business representatives that, according to Hirsch, "maintained close ties to the city's economic elite." Many of those elites were also U of C graduates and/or Hyde Park residents. The MHPC promoted plans



for the "re-development" and "revitalization" of Chicago. These plans were quickly accepted by local and state politicians. **They called for the acquisition of prime real estate,** similar to when Loop interests targeted and displaced the first Chinatown in 1910-12. Much of this land targeted by U. of C. was already home to working-class Black, Latino, and White communities in Chicago. To take land and legally displace people, the MHPC derived ways to label entire areas as *blighted.* Since many White landlords let their properties in lower-income communities go to waste, especially on the *Near West Side* and *Black Belt* (e.g., stopping cleaning services once Whites moved out and people of color or immigrants moved in), some areas were easier to label as blighted than others. Yet, even enclaves with well kept properties owned by Blacks were targeted for urban renewal. During the 1930s, over 21,000 units of housing were demolished, one third of which were in Black communities.

Postcard: Marshall Field's department store on State Street, main floor, 1934.

Responding to the demands of White residents, the City of Chicago also declared certain areas of the city to be *conservation zones.* During the 1940s, growth coalitions like the MHPC were behind a series of legal measures by the City of Chicago that displaced thousands of families in Chicago. These families were of all backgrounds, and many were devastated by being removed from their homes. Even though some White communities continued to fight to maintain racial segregation, the new practices of urban "revitalization" demonstrated again in Chicago that people from the lower-classes were dispensable. For the Black community, this included the middle classes as well. Above all else, people were being labeled "undesirables," not to be welcomed near the new consumer and corporate mecca of the Midwest - downtown Chicago.

The expansion of the Black Metropolis increased the Black presence downtown which alarmed certain powerful business interests. In order to "save" their multi-million dollar investments, "the large Loop interests dominated the first phase of the city's post-World War II rebuilding program," says Hirsch. These interests included former State Street department stores, led by Marshall Field and Co. As early as 1942, designs for a "complete rehabilitation of the center of the city" had started.

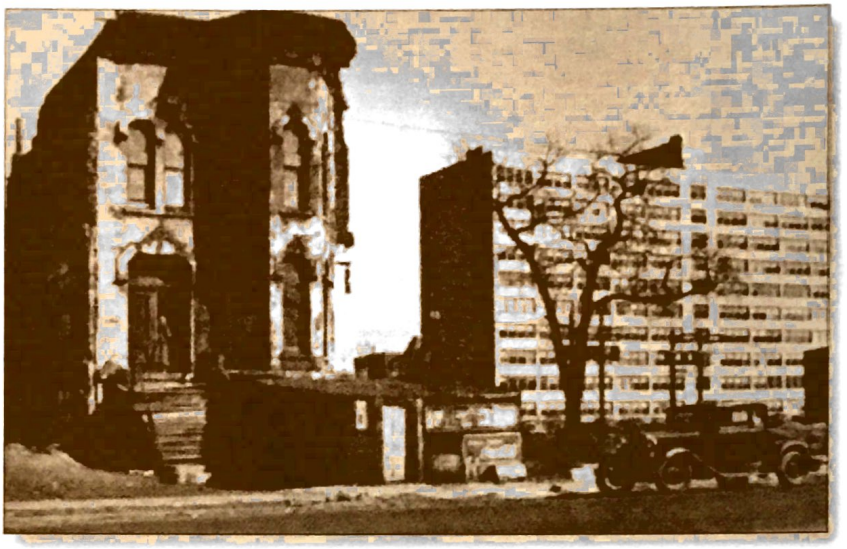
The key figures coordinating these efforts were **Milton C. Mumford**, Assistant Vice President of Marshall Field and Co.; **Holma D. Pettibone**, President of the Chicago Title and Trust Co.; and **Ferd Kramer**, President of the Draper and Kramer real estate firm. Highly connected, these men were also members of the MHPC. Kramer, a board member of Michael Reese Hospital, was the president of MHPC at the time.

The work of the MHPC was expressed by its **redevelopment** subcommittee chair who stated, "We must find something which will permit the job [Black removal] to be done in big enough bites, fast enough, with the use of outside funds...and which continues the chain reaction principle." Their "chain reaction" of bringing Whites back into the city then began - and is accelerating right now.

At that time, cities across the nation were experiencing a **White flight** to the suburbs. So, "together" according to Hirsch, "Pettibone, Mumford, and the MHPC devised a redevelopment formula based on private profit and public power, and saw their program accepted by both Mayor Martin H. Kennelly and the state legislature...More important, the nation followed." Hirsch continues, "[t]he Chicago plan embodied the concepts later enacted in the federal Housing Act of 1949." Thus, in 1947, due to the passage in Illinois of the *Blighted Areas Redevelopment and Relocation* acts, Chicago was placed "into the foreground of American cities

as a laboratory for…urban centers to rejuvenate themselves," according to the MHPC.

Basically, the acts allowed for government funds to be used to acquire land, relocate people, and sell the land to developers at a fraction of its original cost (as low as $1). In addition, the powers of **eminent domain** to acquire land were greatly enhanced. Once passed, Milton Mumford quickly helped Mayor Kennelly choose the members of the **Chicago Land Clearance Commission**, the group to oversee funds for land clearance. Mumford went so far as to suggest that one "carefully selected" Black member be placed on the agency. With these tools in place, Chicago was primed for "renewal."



New I.I.T. dormitory near 3100 S. Wabash with lone surviving home; Photo by Mildred Mead, Hyde Park Historical Society

Major Land Grabs:

Michael Reese Hospital, the Illinois Institute of Technology, Lake Meadows, and Prairie Shores

The Black population continued to grow in Chicago as corporate interests focused their development plans in and around the Loop, including **Arthur Rubloff** launching plans for the *Magnificent Mile* on North Michigan Avenue. Forced to locate into the crowded Southeast Side (e.g., Bronzeville, Grand Boulevard, Kenwood-Oakland) due to heightened White ethnic community riots and racist real estate policies like restrictive covenants, the Black community posed "major threats" to **Michael Reese Hospital** and the **Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)**. Both institutions began to acquire land in the early 1940s and initiate plans for "renewal."

In 1940, IIT acquired 103 acres of land to greatly expand on its 7 acre campus. Ferd Kramer later credited IIT with being the "keystone" to "reclaiming" the near South Side. In 1945, Michael Reese followed suit as they devised a blueprint for the acquisition of surrounding properties. Reese Hospital worked in collaboration with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) "which assembled land and then sold it at auction," explained Hirsch. Shortly thereafter, IIT and Reese officially joined forces to form the nucleus of the South Side Planning Board (SSPB). Months later, within days of Illinois passage of the Redevelopment Act, the SSPB released a report called an *Opportunity for Private and Public Investment in Rebuilding Chicago*. This report was "specifically designed to point out to investors and the general public, the attractive possibilities of large-scale urban development in the central South Side." In addition, the plan specifically stated that, "the same people within the area were not necessarily to be the group planned for."

The first major investor to cash in was the New York Life Insurance Company. Their grand experiment, called **Lake Meadows** (35th and Cottage Grove), was to redevelop a stretch of prime lakefront land for middle income Whites and those Blacks who could afford it. Ferd Kramer, head of MHPC, also cashed in as the manager of Lake Meadows and developer of **Prairie Shores,** right down the street. He tried desperately to move Whites in who worked at Reese Hospital. His 80% White occupancy rate and tactics to keep it that way led to discrimination lawsuits by Black residents.

At the time of planning in 1948, over 26,000 families lived in "well kept" resident-owned

Children's book cover: *Great Migration* by Jacob Lawrence

properties where Lake Meadows currently stands. Many Black property owners complained how actual slums were being neglected and their properties on the lake were singled out for redevelopment. To no avail, all of the families were relocated. Once built, Lake Meadows offered rents at 300 to 600% above 1940 averages. What happened to displaced residents? Kramer and others in the SSPB claimed that new public housing was "the critical key to freeing land for redevelopment by private enterprise."

The Second Great Migration and Intensified Segregation

The Great Migration of southern Blacks to the North began in the early 1900s. In 1890, the Black population in the North was 14,271. By 1960 it had swelled to 812,637. Black folks came in search of a better life, fleeing the racist Jim Crow South and displaced by the modernization of farming equipment. Jobs in factories, stockyards, and foundries gave them hope. Black owned newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender* supported migrants and dubbed Chicago as "the promised land."

Over the years this hope quickly diminished as angry Whites instigated numerous race riots to keep Blacks out of their neighborhoods and segregate them into crowded areas on the South, and then the West sides of the city. In addition, landlords and the City of Chicago allowed areas where Blacks moved to rapidly deteriorate. Horrid living conditions followed. Rat attacks on sleeping children occurred frequently and children maimed or killed by rats was not uncommon. Other life-threatening problems in the *Black Belt* included rampant fires, high infant mortality rates, and nearly double the tuberculosis rates of Whites.

What caused these conditions? History shows that systematic racial segregation of the Black community into a very tight strip of land led to "the most critical housing shortage since the Chicago fire." In 1947, within the Black Belt, it was estimated that 375,000 people lived in an area equipped to house no more than 110,000 - triple the maximum capacity. Tenants had to pay anywhere between 10 to 200 percent more for rent and were fully excluded from purchasing homes in White communities. When able to purchase homes in those communities under racial transition, they were charged two to three times more than the property was worth by scheming real estate agents/owners. They also had to sign unfair contracts that often led to forced evictions as well as loss of investment and property.

Allan H. Spears, author of *Black Chicago*, said "an almost impervious wall of hostility and discrimination has isolated negroes from the mainstream of Chicago life. Under such conditions, negroes have tried to make the best of their circumstances by creating a meaningful

South Side real estate agents speak while the women, likely their secretaries, pose for this photograph.

White flight - erosion of tax base

life of their own. But they have done so because white society has left them no alternative."

As people of color were squeezed into already tight slums, middle class Whites were migrating to the spacious suburbs in record numbers. Over 270,000 Whites left Chicago between 1950 and 1956. By 1959, over 550,000 mostly single family homes were built for Whites in the suburbs with lower financing and more affordable prices than for Blacks trying to purchase properties in the city. By this time, the **dual housing market** was so thoroughly entrenched that Black families found it nearly impossible to establish community roots anywhere but the South Side and Lawndale. The real estate agents, however, could change this discriminatory pattern just by selling homes to people of color in other parts of the city. Would realtors, most of whom were White residents living in White communities break from these patterns? A few did - most did not.

Land Swindlers: The Role of Real Estate Agents in Cementing Chicago Segregation and a Legacy of Racism

Real estate corporations, especially those established by dominating landowners with mass amounts of property holdings (e.g., **Arthur Rubloff, Arthur Wirtz, John Baird, Harry Chaddick, Charles Swibel**, the **Pritzkers**), have made their profits in the transfer of land and wealth through the perpetual buying, selling, and development of real estate. While a few men, like those just mentioned, were more preoccupied with the "Big Score" such as downtown high rises and huge shopping malls, there were others who profited from small-time housing sales by using race and legal trickery as a point of sale. In Chicago, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and one's level of income and wealth were (and still are) factors for both the powerful land developers and smaller real estate agents to consider. Yet, no factor has proven more decisive in Chicago's land-use patterns than the color of one's skin. Herein lies the "**panic peddler.**"

Rightfully dubbed *panic peddlers* in an article from the *Daily News* (October, 1959), these real estate agents, like parasites, fed off of their prey by stoking racial fears and exploiting both the working and middle class White sellers and the Black buyers with a "nasty bag of fear tricks." What were these "fear tricks" and how were they used to make, according to one agent from the 1950s, over $100,000 a year with your eyes closed?

In *Family Properties*, Beryl Satter documented the tactics, opinions, and codes of ethics real estate agents followed based on her father's pioneering work during the 1950s. He was a Chicago lawyer of Jewish descent who fought with, and on behalf of, Black families facing severe housing discrimination. These panic peddlers followed a strict racial formula in Chicago when selling properties, a formula with four (4) critical aspects of importance driven by policies handed down from the Chicago Real Estate Board, the Federal Housing Administration, and MHPC. While designed by these powerful entities, the formula was practiced by agents and challenged by the Black community for producing **the most segregated city in the**

Four families evicted from their homes on South Emerald Street

United States by 1957. Popular among real estate agents and White home sellers at the time, the formula greatly enhanced their profits while draining the Black community, for the most part, of tremendous amounts of wealth and property over the years. This racial formula went as follows:

1) Do not sell any homes to Blacks or other people of color in White neighborhoods. Doing so was called "blockbusting." Just one Black-owned home may lead to the "redlining" of the entire area by the Federal Housing Administration and a huge drop in property values.

2) If Blacks move closer, or if just one home becomes occupied by a Black resident, begin to encourage - even badger - all nearby White residents to sell quickly. Get them to sell for less than the property is worth to a real estate entity by spreading fear and making Whites panic about the eventual drop in property values. Spread rumors, mostly without any real truth, about the coming of violent crime, impending ghetto encroachment, and "uncouth" habits in order to increase White fear and reach quicker sales at lower prices. In a word, force Whites, most of whom were working-class ethnics, to sell low by creating a panic.

3) *Sell the home to a Black buyer for much more than the property is worth.* Make them purchase the property "on contract" - not an insured mortgage. Unlike mortgages for Whites, this contract provided no legal rights or protections for the buyer. Even one late payment after years of paying on time could, and did, lead to an eviction. An estimated 85% of homes were "sold" to Black buyers *"on contract"* - with numerous evictions occurring after extra fees, ballooning interest rates, and other unfair rates were placed on Black purchasers.

4) *Resell the home to another "buyer."* Continue the cycle of stripping the Black community of their wealth, property, dignity, and stability while reaping extraordinary profits.

These practices continued in Chicago for many years with an untold number of victims - likely in the tens of thousands directly impacted. **Dempsey Travis**, an African American real estate broker, activist, and author of the time, summed it up this way: "I had been concerned ever since I started in the real estate business, over the way Whites exploited Blacks by selling them houses on contract, without a mortgage. I knew that such contracts were often terribly inflated, with legal provisions that meant the buyer - so desperate to get out of the black ghetto, that he often failed to fully understand what he was getting into - could lose all interest in a home he had been paying on for years by missing a single payment. The heartbreak that such a situation could cause was graphically demonstrated [again and again]."

Responding to the exploitation of his community, Travis spent his working-life orchestrating numerous fair housing solutions, obtaining loans for Black families, and speaking against racist housing injustices. Travis learned about the **Contract Buyers League** in 1970 - a group of Black homeowners who had courageously banded together, withheld their payments, and sought to force renegotiations of their unjust contracts. With these homeowners standing to lose everything, Travis then witnessed the Cook County Sheriff evicting families from their homes on South Eggleston Avenue. Seeing toys, furniture, pictures, bedding, and clothes tossed indiscriminately into the mud, and hearing of homes being fire bombed and dynamited, Travis embarked to secure financial assistance and stability for more than 500 contract buyers. After contacting four Black-owned banks and insurance companies, and four White-owned institutions, Travis secured $400,000 in mortgage money, none of which came from White institutions. With this, he obtained $3.5 million in mortgage commitment from the Federal National Mortgage Association in Washington, D.C. This victory, which contributed to the ending of contract buying by the early 1970s, was featured in the *Chicago Tribune* (August 18, 1970) where Travis stated, "As a black businessman, I believe I have an obligation to the black community. I gain my living from the community, and I should do what I can to help the community."

A year earlier, Travis delivered a paper on housing at the National Black Economic Development Foundation for Community Organization, later reproduced in *The Black*

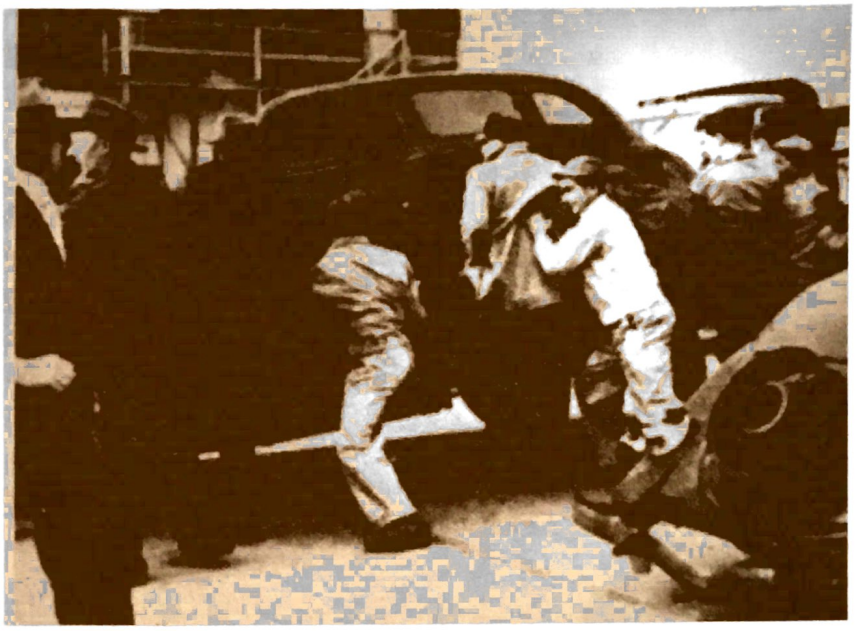
Scholar and other publications. He placed the housing struggles of African Americans within its proper historical context. The following excerpt summarizes long-standing injustices and speaks of the next phase of struggle in Chicago during the late 1940s and 1950s. He said:

"Historically, because of our position of servitude, we were never permitted to be counted among the landed gentry. When land in America, during the late 18th century, was selling for 8 and 9 cents an acre, most black people in this country were in shackles and chains or prohibited, by law, from becoming landowners. In those few instances where we were permitted to buy, the absence of security was always present because of the fear of being dispossessed by an angry white individual or mob. Many instances are recorded in history where Blacks had to leave land, home, and personal [belongings] in the middle of the night, simply to escape with their lives.

Racial Violence in Chicago Kept Mostly Quiet: Race Riots, Bombings, and Housing Disturbances (1945—1950s)

A Black family moves one block outside the Black Belt, crossing an imaginary line, trying to escape dilapidated housing and severe overcrowding. The family seeks to live in peace with their new neighbors, White, Asian, Latino or Black, and raise a stable family. Instead, a large mob of 3,000 White people gather in front of the home shouting racist epithets, hurling rocks through windows, setting the garage ablaze, and bombing the newly purchased home. Children cry hysterically as parents race against time to protect them while their newly bought home, with all their belongings, burns to the ground.

This was the underlying threat expressed by Lindner, a White character from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association in Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. After respectfully introducing himself to the Younger family upon hearing about Lena's (mama's) purchase of a home in



Whites overturn car owned by a Black family at the Airport Homes, 1946, Chicago Tribune.

Clybourne Park, Lindner expresses his intent as the "welcoming committee" to Walter, Ruth and Beneatha…

Lindner: ...our community is made up of people who've worked hard as the dickens for years to build up that little community. They're not rich and fancy people; just hard-working, honest people who don't really have much but those little homes and a dream of the kind of community they want to raise their children in... [T]he overwhelming majority of our people out there feel that people get along better, take more of a common interest in the life of the community, when they share a common background. I want you to believe me when I tell you race prejudice simply doesn't enter into it. It is a matter of the people of Clybourne Park believing, rightly or wrongly, as I say, that for the happiness of all concerned that our Negro families are happier when they live in their own communities.

Beneatha: (With a grand and bitter gesture) This, friends, is the Welcoming Committee!

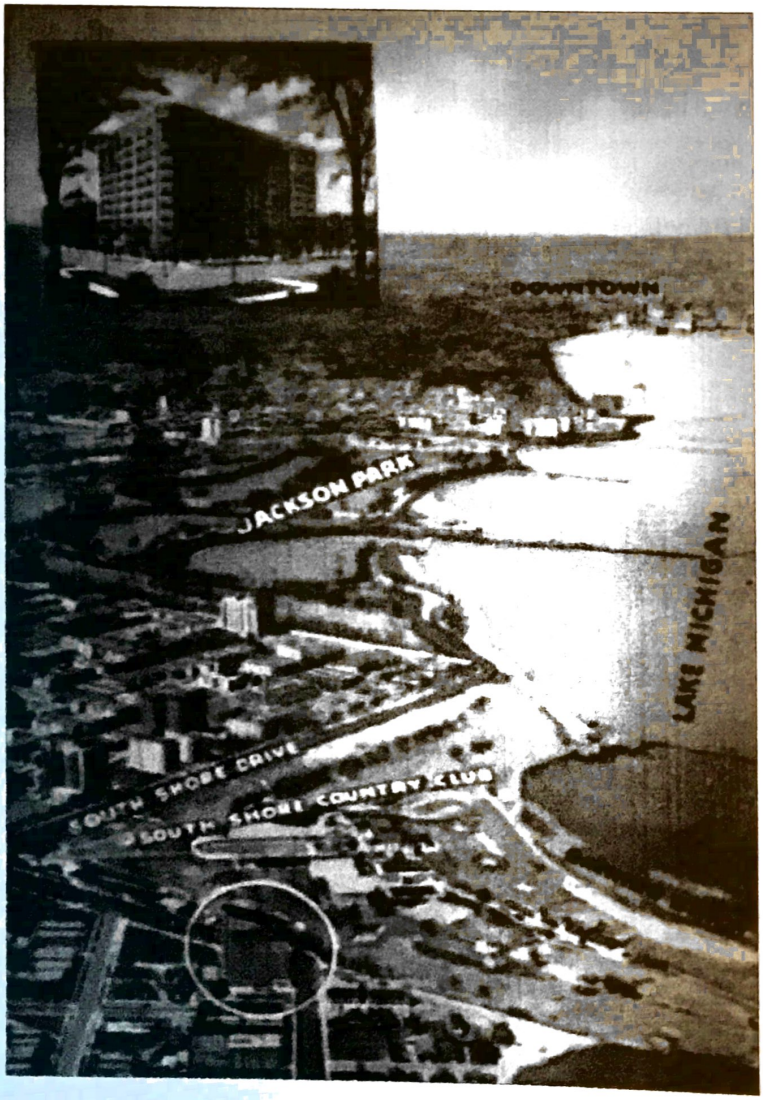
The characters have a back and forth discussion as Lindner tries to offer to buy back the home to no avail.

Lindner: ...Well—I don't understand why you people are reacting this way. What do you think

you are going to gain by moving into a neighborhood where you just aren't wanted and where some elements—well—people can get awful worked up when they feel that their whole way of life and everything they've ever worked for is threatened.

Walter: Get out!

Threats and violence, dubbed "a pattern of terrorism" by a group called the **Council Against Discrimination**, occurred time and again in Chicago. In effect before and after the peak year,s violence was especially disturbing from 1945 through the early 1950s. The media, City Hall, and corporate powers essentially chose to ignore these crimes by sweeping the pains, sufferings, and protests of the Black community under a rug. At least **357 incidents** were reported during a five-year period alone. A quick review of these housing disturbances by Hirsch in *Making the Second Ghetto* exposes not only their frequency, but the official response - or lack thereof - by those in power. As a result, housing became "the city's most explosive racial issue." Take a look at the partial list of violent acts against Black families seeking to own a home or rent outside the *Black Belt*:



Postcard: Aerial view of the Southeast Side including South Shore, Jackson Park, Bronzeville, and Downtown. Notice Bronzeville is skipped over with no nameplate.

1946: Airport Homes housing project, 60th and Karlov: Blacks attempting to move into emergency shelters were met by violent mobs of 1,500 to 3,000 angry Whites.

1947: Fernwood Park housing project, 103rd and Halsted: Three nights of riots with 1,500 to 5,000 White persons each night opposing a few Black veterans moving into CHA housing.

1949: Park Manor, 71st and St. Lawrence: Frequent occurrences between 1945 and 1950, including arson and vandalism; over 2,000 to 3,000 Whites forced a Black doctor out.

1949: Englewood, 56th and Peoria: Up to 10,000 Whites gathered outside a home falsely rumored to be sold to a Black; Jews, Blacks, college students, and others were attacked.

1951: Cicero: 2,000 to 5,000 Whites attack, loot and burn an apartment building that housed a single Black family. (Cicero was the most notorious bastion of racism in the Chicago area.)

1953: Trumbull Park, 103rd and Yates: Whites from the South Deering community spent an entire decade keeping Blacks out of CHA housing in the area by using explosives and mob action. The Illinois National Guard had to be called out to restore order - not since the 1919 Race Riots.

1957: Calumet Park, 99th and Avenue C: A crowd of 6,000 to 7,000 Whites attacked 100 Black picnickers, stoned 70 cars, and injured dozens of people; *East Side Civic League* was born.

These violent bombings and riots were often organized by ethnic Catholics and stoked by real estate agents to keep even one Black family out of the area. They went largely uncovered by the media with a few exceptions. As for the Chicago police, they were often called to the scene, sometimes hundreds deep. Usually ineffective, police often purposefully allowed White mobs to make their stands. In some instances, the police were also stoned and harmed by wild crowds. As a result, Blacks continued to be mostly confined to the Black Belt and two other sections of the city - in **Lawndale** (West Side) and **Uptown** (North Side), where a smaller community had evolved since the 1920s. In this confinement, extreme housing shortages and slum conditions were further aggravated.

From another point of view, as it became clearer that this northern city was not the "land of promise," the Black community continued to establish a stronger sense of unity for their own survival. This could be seen by the growth in community organizations, churches, newspapers, centers, and local **organizing campaigns**. This tradition of uplift and struggle, born from the historic Black resistance to slavery on the long march to freedom, dignity and equality, was carried forth here in Chicago and throughout northern cities.

Black Organizations on the Rise - Come Under Attack through Disinvestment and Destabilization (Late 1940s—1950s)

In the face of restrictive covenants, redlining, race riots, house bombings, vigilante attacks, slum conditions, rat infestations, employment discrimination, severe overcrowding, bogus housing contracts, police dis-service, legal discrimination, and other oppressive conditions in a society marked by White supremacy, the Black community, as throughout U.S. history, organized themselves and struggled for dignity and equality. Needless to say, this would be an uphill battle in a city like Chicago with its history of demonizing and displacing First Nation peoples, exploiting immigrants, creating divisive labor relations amongst workers, and forcefully segregating its Black, Latino/a, Asian and ethnic White residents into impoverished ghettos - yet people endured. In these turbulent times, the Black community in particular waged organized responses to the problems they faced - responses that have moved the mechanisms of history, instilled a sense of collective purpose, and made an impact in ways often unnoticed and uncovered.

For the most part, organized grassroots efforts occurred outside the traditional electoral battlefield. Chicago, in terms of its political decision-making structure, was fiercely controlled by the **Democratic Party** (aka, **the Machine**). People of color could not rely on electoral politics to resolve their problems even though they successfully elected Blacks into various offices—aided by the concentration of Black voters in the Black Belt.

With little faith in solving problems through electoral politics, Chicago's Black organizations (some were integrated) multiplied. The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** opened its first local office of any kind in Chicago in 1911. Ida B. Wells led the **Negro Fellowship League** as its shinning light during the early 1900s. The **Chicago Urban League** (CUL) came about in 1916. The **Chicago Council of Negro Organizations** was formed around 1935 as a means of "marshalling the forces" of united community action. Other groups, including the **Council Against Discrimination** (CAD) and the **Committee to End Mob Violence** (CEMV), emerged in the 1940s. These organizations, among others, were taking actions on a number of levels against racism, discrimination, slum conditions, and much more. With the outbreak of White violence against Blacks moving outside the Black Belt in the 1940s, these organizations, especially the NAACP, CUL, and CEMV, became more radicalized. Leaders such

TABLE 1

Snapshot of Black Organizations with Housing-Based Actions (early to mid 1900s) (including the Chicago Defender newspaper)

Black Organizations	Notable Actions Taken on Housing Issues	Forms of Attack Against Them and by Whom
Chicago Defender Founded by Robert S. Abbott	• Wrote hard-hitting articles on racism, discrimination, inequalities, and the fight for Black dignity • Covered housing inequalities, violence, arsons, and other issues related to slum conditions in Black Belt • Under new leadership during the 1940s, at the time of the Lake Meadows development, the Defender took a more pro-development stance and turned towards sensationalizing crime more than covering racial issues	• Became more moderate in the 1940s under new leadership • Aligned with William Dawson and pro-development forces • Obtained major advertising funds from Whites such as those from the Chicago Land Clearance Commission
Chicago Urban League (CUL)	• Conducted investigations into slum conditions and steeply rising rents (even during the Depression) • Conducted research into numerous race riots • Took on legal cases against restrictive covenants • Handled thousands of individual cases of African Americans living in slum conditions, being homeless, or needing housing assistance	• Funders, esp. White industrialists pulled their support • Moderate Black members left CUL • Due to lack of funds, CUL closed for six months; re-opened with more business community support and conservative leadership
Council Against Discrimination (CAD) Established after the Emergency Assistance Conference in early 1940s	• Demanded the integration of CHA housing sites since many CHA sites were maintained as all-White • Held marches, rallies, conferences against restrictive covenants and violence against Blacks	• Conservative church groups cut off support to CAD • More militant Blacks disagreed with heavy Jewish involvement and supported CEMV
Committee to End Mob Violence (CEMV) Est. in 1949 by CUL executive Sidney Williams after Peoria Street riot	• Took on legal cases against restrictive covenants • Openly addressed the "hush-hush press policy" of Mayor Kennelly, the police commander, human relations groups, and the press • Organized against mob violence	• CEMV became the target of anti-radical, anti-communism attacks during the "red scare" • White pressure against CEMV forced members to choose sides and split with CUL (internal divisions)
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	• Took on legal cases, held conferences, and organized marches against restrictive covenants • Demanded (and obtained) support for the Ida B. Wells housing project • Advocated for the appointment of Robert Taylor to the Chicago Housing Authority • Publicly charged the CHA with racial discrimination • Gained Black access to formerly White swimming pools, restaurants, and other local accommodations • Reported the misuse of Title I and III federal programs to further remove and segregate Blacks	• Funding was cut • Internal divisions between progressives, moderates, and conservatives took place • Influenced by Richard Daley and the Democratic Machine, William Dawson seized control of NAACP by sending 600 precinct captains in to vote his way at NAACP meetings

Other African American groups covering housing inequalities / slum conditions:
Champions, Vigilantes, Park Lake Council, Snowdenville Community Council, and various women's clubs.

as **Sidney Williams** (Chicago Urban League and CEMV), took strong stances—putting life and livelihood on the line. (See Table 1 on opposite page).

As shown in Table 1, leading Black organizations came under considerable attack in Chicago by the late 1940s to the early 50s just as the city's industrialists, land owners, planners, and politicians were uprooting and displacing tens of thousands of families. These attacks, both overt and subversive, fueled internal breakdowns that lead to in-fighting, ideological divisions, and strategic differences in addressing systemic segregation, racism, and poverty. The attacks were part of a nationwide, even global, campaign of anti-Communism, anti-progressivism, and Cold War militarization on the part of the United States. Dubbed *McCarthyism* after the zealot, Senator Joseph McCarthy, this "red scare" employed lies and deceptions to target individuals and organizations everywhere through exclusion, firings, persecution, and even imprisonment. Due in part to these attacks, many Black leaders were either marginalized, became more moderate, and/or were forced to curtail radical solutions for justice and equality throughout the 1950s.

In was not until the mid 1950s, sparked by events such as the brutal killing in Mississippi of a young Chicagoan named **Emmett Till**, when a new tide of younger leaders came on the scene to challenge "Jim Crow housing" with a greater force both within and outside the system. Chicago's Black community had endured years of race riots, restrictive covenants, and overcrowded slum housing while their organizing efforts were co-opted and de-funded - including by Black political leaders. Enough was enough, many felt. People, both Black and White, were now taking action within the context of the blossoming Civil Rights movement.

More people were getting involved. **Harold Washington**, a young lawyer, became active in electoral politics through his father, a precinct captain. Harold organized the **Young Democrats** to be a greater force for the development of Black leadership. He went on to become Chicago's first Black mayor in 1983. **Dempsey Travis** became president of the **Dearborn Real Estate Board and Chicago Insurance Brokers' Association** by diligently fighting against discriminatory insurance and housing practices. "I took a fighting position on the side of the black community rather than the 'go along and get along' attitude adopted by many of my business contemporaries." Travis continues, "The only bottom line compensation that I received from fighting against injustices was the ability to look in the mirror each morning while shaving a face that reflected a feeling of contentment for having been on the right side of Blacks' struggle for civil rights." **Timuel Black**, a longtime schoolteacher at Farragut and DuSable High Schools, author and professor in the City Colleges, has been a prominent Civil Rights activist since the 1950s. His tireless work on behalf of Black self-determination, community building, equal public education, and strong Black political representation is an inspiration and example for many generations of Chicagoans.

While the struggle for civil and human rights took a sharp turn upward in the 1960s, the 50s were a different story. As shown, Black organizations, along with the Chicago Housing Authority's de-segregation leaders Elizabeth Wood and Robert Taylor, were being destabilized just when Chicago's power structure took full advantage of federal dollars to build many high rise CHA "projects." These structures, many have concluded, were both a blessing and a curse—as they provided some housing relief, yet confined Blacks into prison-like structures that lacked basic community needs.

Before our story turns to the turbulent 1960s, we'll examine the facts surrounding the construction, placement, maintenance and tenant realities inside massive public housing complexes, ncluding the largest single housing project in the world, the **Robert Taylor Homes**.