

Activity Title:

Discovery connections between Race Restrictive Property Covenants and the Wealth Gap in Connecticut by Daisy and Joe.

Grade level and theme:

HIGH SCHOOL - United States History

Students explore people, events, and movements in United States History from the 1870s to the present with a focus on inquiry into the changes in society, economic development, and the emergence of the U.S. as a global power.

Themes:

The Struggle for Freedom, Equality, and Social Justice

Topic: Race restrictive property covenants

Cities or towns: West Hartford, Manchester

Historical background:

Imagine you are an African American looking for residence around the West Hartford area in the 1940s; you will find yourself in a disadvantaged position due to a sentence in a government-sanctioned property deed. "No persons of any race except the white race shall use or occupy any building on any lot." The explicit discrimination that takes place in Connecticut is called race restrictive property covenants. Inserted by a real estate property developer for High Ledge Homes, the covenant enabled individual property owners, homeowners' associations, and real estate developers to ban anyone not considered to be part of the "white race."

Although race-restrictive covenants were no longer legally enforceable after 1948, the legacy continues to influence the later generations in various aspects. People who bought into the restrictive district in the 1940s benefited financially from government-sanctioned segregation that boosted property values. And when their descendants inherited these properties, they inherited wealth accumulated over generations. In the present, as the assets disparity across race and ethnicity continue to expand, the lesson plan sets students up to explore the role race restrictive property covenant play in racial wealth disparities.

Compelling Question:

How did government-sanctioned practices in the 1940s shape racial wealth disparities in present Connecticut?

Supporting Questions:

1. What is the Race Restrictive Property Covenant?

2. What was the price of properties protected by the covenant in the 1940s?
3. What is the price of properties protected by the covenant in the present?

Primary Sources

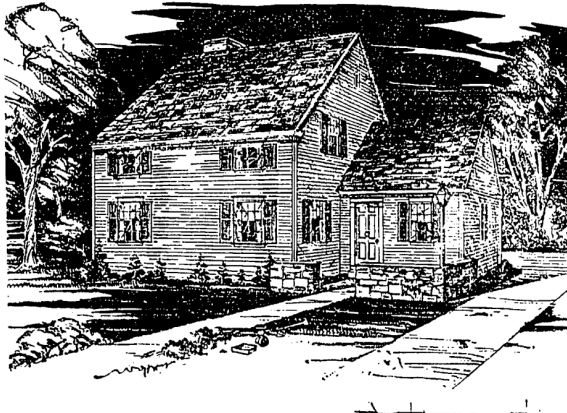
Historical Newspapers with housing prices

West Hartford:

1. The range of housing prices advertised in the Hartford Courant for Bel-Crest's development, 1941

Two Six-Room Houses Under Way This Week: One Will Be at 198 Ridgewood ...
The Hartford Courant (1923-); Mar 3, 1940; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant
 pg. B2

Drawing of New West Hartford Home



Two Six-Room Houses Under Way This Week

One Will Be at 198 Ridgewood Road, With Unusual Feature in Room Set Off by Itself; Full Advantage Taken of View Over Country Club

Two new six-room houses are to be started this week in the Bel-Crest tract on Ridgewood Road, West Hartford, and four more are to be started soon in the same tract on Foxridge Road, a new street in the development. John Chapman, sales representative of Bel-Crest, Inc., owner of the tract and builder of the homes there, announced last week.

Mr. Chapman said that the greatest demand for new homes on the part of people who are not seeking something under \$6000 is for houses of six rooms. Therefore it is the present intention of the developers of this tract to supply this demand.

One of the two houses that will be started this week will be located at 198 Ridgewood Road. This will have an unusual feature in that a room will be set off by itself, so that it could be used as an office for one who transacts considerable business at home. It could also be used as an additional bedroom, if preferred.

Two six-room houses under way this week: One will be at 198 ridgewood road, with unusual feature in room set off by itself; full advantage taken of view over country club drawing of new west hartford home. (1940, Mar 03). *The Hartford Courant (1923-)* Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.trincoll.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/two-six-room-houses-under-way-this-week/docview/559299303/se-2?accountid=14405>

Manchester:

2. The range of housing prices advertised in the Hartford Courant for Greenway INC's development, 1940

Imagine! A Home Like This

for only
\$4335

\$435 - \$30.85
 DOWN MONTHLY

(Subject to F.H.A.
 Insurance Requirements)

in
Greenway Park
 That New, Unique Home
 Community in Manchester



Briefly, here is what you get. A BIG home of Cape Cod design. Four finished rooms on the first floor with heating, plumbing and electrical work carried to the second where there is space for additional rooms. Full cellar, steam heat, fireplace, kitchen has plenty of built-in cabinets and linoleum on floor and counter. Lot 60 ft. front. Sewer, gas, electricity all in and paid for.

Greenway Park is on the site of the Wilson Nursery tract. From Hartford pass through Manchester Center to Manchester Green. Take Woodbridge Street to the tract.

GREENWAY, INC.
 Owners and Developers
 Tel. Manchester 4737 or Hfd. 2-0779

Inspection Invited Daily and Sunday

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Display ad 132 -- no title. (1940, Nov 10). *The Hartford Courant* (1923-) Retrieved from
<http://ezproxy.trincoll.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/historical-newspapers/display-ad-132-no-title/docview/559391235/se-2?accountid=14405>

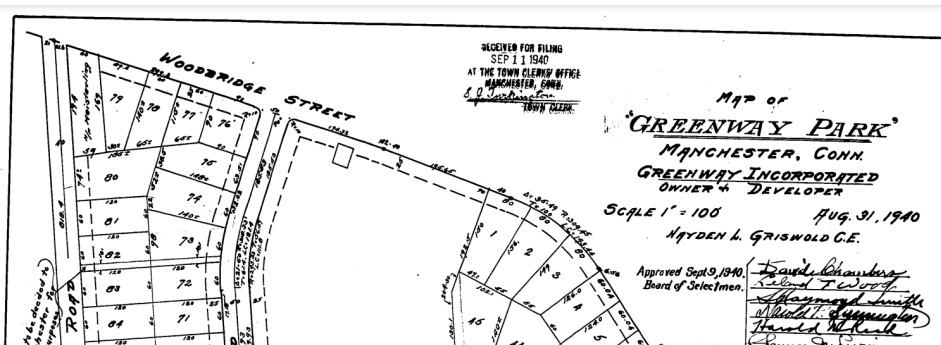
Race restrictive covenants in the 1940s with maps

- Examples of restrictions in Town of West Hartford with race restrictive covenants, Bel-Crest, Inc. development, vol. 158, p. 7-8, October 30, 1940, and map #250 [bel_crest.pdf \(ontheline.github.io\)](#)

be done thereon which may be or become an alleyway.

(e) No persons of any race except the white race shall use or occupy any building on any lot except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race employed by an owner or tenant.

- Example of maps in the Town of Manchester with race restrictive covenants, Greenway Park development, vol. 141, p. 93, Nov 18, 1940, and map SB2-36 [greenway_park.pdf \(ontheline.github.io\)](#)



The Inquiry Activity

Part 1.

- Look at a property advertisement in 1940 (primary sources number 1 and 2) ; what did you notice?
- Find the range of housing prices in West Hartford and Manchester neighborhoods in the excerpt of [ProQuest](#) historical newspapers and record them in the table below.

West Hartford:

Manchester:

Part 2.

Now that the students get the idea of the housing price in the 1940s, through the next part of the activity, students will explore **why specific groups of people are prohibited from buying these properties.**

- Read the first three paragraphs of the [On The Line](#) - *Restricting with Property Covenants by Tracey Wilson, Vianna Iorio, and Jack Dougherty, 2022-03-31* about the Race Restrictive Property Covenant and answer the supporting questions.
 1. When did the race restrictive property covenant insert?
 2. Who or what organization inserts the race restrictive property covenant?
 3. What is the scope of the use of racially restrictive covenants ?
 4. What does West Hartford rely on more to reach the racial barrier?
 5. Why is race restrictive covenants in favor of White families?
- See covenants and maps corresponding to part 1 of the activity in primary sources 3 and 4.

Part 3.

- Using [Zillow.com](#), find the present average house price by searching for the same road names as in the previous step.

St/date	1940s	present
Ridgewood Rd		
Woodbridge St		

Part 4.

- Using data you collected in part 2, answer the following questions.
 1. If you can purchase a house in the 1940s, how much profit did it bring you, assuming you held it until today.
 2. If you could not purchase a house in the 1940s, how much more would you pay to buy the same house today?
 3. Review Part 1; what does this activity inform you about racial disparity?

Communicating Conclusions

1. In 2021, the CT legislature enforced [new state law](#) in response to the Race Restrictive Covenant in the 1940s. Describe what this new law does.
2. Write a letter to a property owner to inform him/her about the new CT law and address the following questions:

How can you explain the history of race restrictive covenant to the property owners?

What suggestions can you give to the property owners?

- Jacalyn Severance, “Revelation of a Racist Property Restriction Leads to New State Law in Connecticut,” UConn Today, July 27, 2021, <https://today.uconn.edu/2021/07/revelation-of-a-racist-property-restriction-leads-to-new-state-law-in-connecticut/>.
- “Racist Covenant Removed From Deed to Manchester Home,” NBC Connecticut, August 3, 2021, <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/racist-covenant-removed-from-deed-to-manchester-home/2551049/>.

Additional Resources

Corrigan v. Buckley Case, 1926

[Corrigan v. Buckley, 271 US 323 - Supreme Court 1926 - Google Scholar](#)

Racially Restrictive Covenants in Hartford Area, 1940s

[Restrictive Covenants \(ontheline.github.io\)](https://ontheline.github.io)

“Race Restrictive Covenants in Property Deeds - Connecticut History: A Cthumanities Project.” Connecticut History | a CTHumanities Project - Stories about the people, traditions, innovations, and events that make up Connecticut's rich history., February 14, 2022. <https://connecticuthistory.org/race-restrictive-covenants-in-property-deeds/>.