



Lexington, Kentucky: Segregated by Design

How our past laws and choices created a segregated community


“History, despite its wrenching pain
Cannot be unlived, but if faced
With courage, need not be lived again.”

-- Excerpted from “On the Pulse of the Morning,” by Maya Angelou



Why did we
create this
presentation?

Residential segregation contributes to a lot of unjust situations.

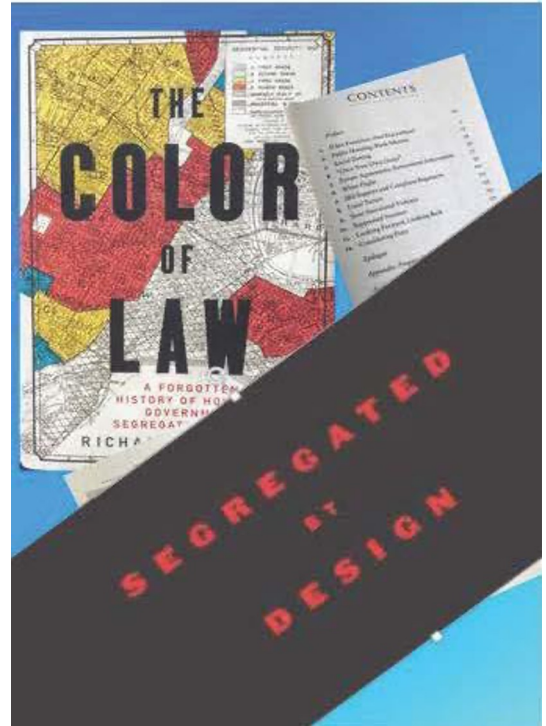
- Unequal home ownership patterns and opportunities
 - Black-White wealth gap
 - Inequities in nearly every facet of daily life
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As we begin,
we need to
tell you:

- *Our aim:* describe and acknowledge Lexington's history
- For more detailed information: [Segregated Lexington](http://segregatedlexington.com) (segregatedlexington.com)
- We include excerpts from historical records that contain disturbing language.

Context

- *Segregated By Design*: key points from *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein
- Video is available at <https://www.segregatedbydesign.com/> to watch again if you wish
- Rothstein's focus is government; we are the government



Does
*Segregated
By Design*
apply to
Lexington?
Yes.

Here in Lexington, government and private interests used:

- Racially Restrictive Deed Covenants
- Redlining
- Realtor Steering
- Certain Planning & Zoning Practices
- Urban Renewal

Racially Restrictive Covenants



For a period of 30 years from this date no part of the property hereby conveyed shall be sold or leased to any negro or any organization or association of negroes, nor to any corporation having negroes as stockholders, nor shall any negro be permitted to occupy said property, provided that this stipulation shall not forbid any owners or lessees from having their negro servants remain or reside on the premises.



Racially restrictive covenants, late 1800s–1948

Restricted the race of
people who could
legally own, rent, or
live on a given
property

Created
and maintained
Whites-only
neighborhoods

Remained legal
through much of the
suburban
development surge

A restrictive covenant on Goodrich Avenue

(2) That said property or any portion of same shall never be sold or leased to any negro or any association of negroes nor shall any negro or association of negroes be permitted to occupy said property but this shall not inhibit any owner or lessee from having their negro servants remain on said property.

Liberty Heights Subdivision

(3). None of this property to be owned by, occupied by or leased to a negro,
and if it is the title to revert to the original owner. .

Racial restrictions *often applied to entire subdivisions.*

From Beechland Subdivision, later part of Kenwick:

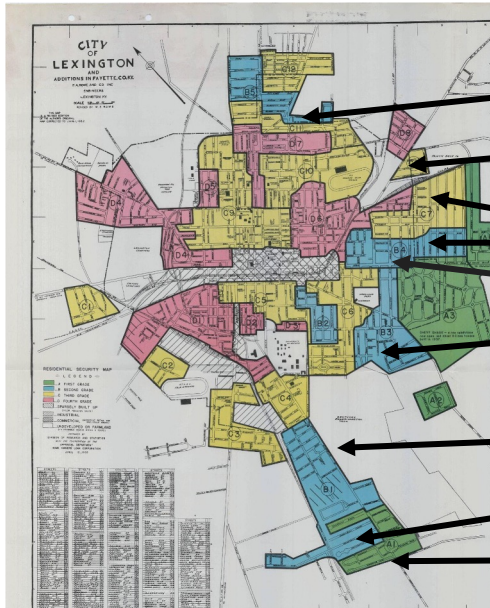
Lots fronting on main Street and Victory Avenue shall not be used for any business purpose whatsoever or for any purpose other than residence purposes for a period of twenty years from date of sale. No lot in said subdivision shall ever be sold or leased to a negro or any person of African decent.

Restrictive
covenants
were common
in Lexington
until the mid-
20th century.

- We examined deeds for homes in selected neighborhoods
 - Affordable at that time
 - Possibly appealing to Black working families.
- EVERY pre-1948 neighborhood we studied kept Black families out using racially restrictive covenants.

Does a racially restrictive covenant apply to your house or neighborhood? Possibly, if it was built by the first half of the 20th century.

So far we know about restrictive covenants here:



Castlewood Drive

Liberty Heights

Kenwick

Mentelle Park

Hollywood Terrace

Forest Park

Suburban Court

Goodrich

Neighborhoods developed after this 1930s map was made that we know have restrictive covenants: Meadows, Meadowthorpe, Rosemill.

Examining all the deeds for an entire city is a huge undertaking, but some communities have done it.

Mapping Prejudice (Minneapolis), University of Minnesota Libraries

- 7-person staff
- 3000+ volunteers spend over 14,000 hours
- Whole county has been mapped
- Result: website and one-hour documentary

Segregated Seattle, Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project at the University of Washington

- 4-person staff
- University students do research as coursework.
- Restrictive covenants affecting 15–20,000 properties found since 2005.
- Washington legislature recently approved funding, and work is near completion.

Mapping Inequality (Richmond Virginia), a project of four universities. Provides redlining information about communities nationwide, including Lexington.


<https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>

Responsibility for restrictive covenants' injustices

Federal, state, and local government:

- FHA required restrictive covenants as a condition of loans
- Property records offices kept plats and deeds
- Court system enforced restrictive covenants

Private institutions and citizens:

- Landowners
 - Developers
 - Real estate agents
 - Banks and other lenders
 - Lawyers
 - Home sellers and buyers
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Seven decades
after the Supreme
Court ruled them
unenforceable,
racially restrictive
covenants still
matter.

Segregation continues. We have all
lost experience in creating
a welcoming community.

White families bought deed-restricted
homes up to 1948, and beyond. Those
homes' values continued to increase
and build equity after that.

Black families could not buy similar
homes, and had fewer housing
choices. They could not build equity.